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ABSTRACT

An in-depth study of teacher centers in Alaska, Montana, Oregon, Idaho, and Washington was conducted. The purpose of the study was to document similarities and differences in approaches, development, successes, and failures and to share collective experiences. This book is divided into three sections. The first section presents descriptive material on each of the eight centers studied. These descriptions provide an overview of the geographical features of the area, the community, the rationale for establishing a teacher center, planning and development procedures, funding, organization, governance, and activities. The second section examines the basic themes that appear to characterize the growth of the centers. These themes are classified into the categories of philosophical, institutional, and programmatic. The third section, "Issues: A Commentary," presents several essays by teacher center staff on common questions and concerns. Comments are given on the issues of needs assessment, evaluation, policy board inservice, and the role of state departments of education. (JD)

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DISCOVERING TEACHER CENTERS:

The Northwest Passage

Glen D. Fielding Richard H. Hersh

Northwest Teacher Center Cluster

1979

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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Copies of this publication are available from:

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Richard Hersh is Professor of Education and Associate Dean of the College of Education, University of Oregon. Doctor Hersh is a policy board member of the Bethel, Eugene, Springfield Teacher Center (B.E.S.T. Center) and was one of six regional and three national documentors for teacher centers this year.

INTRODUCTION

DISCOVERING TEACHER CENTERS attempts to document the first year of the Northwest Cluster's search for an creation of a more effective inservice institution. The year began with the high expectations associated with every idealized adventure. The year began also in fear, the fear of failure associated with every risky enterprise. We think we can safely say that all eight of the projects have not only survived the initial rites of passage but have evolved to a level of maturity which should ultimately enable them to achieve the objectives listed in their original project proposals.

Romantic idealism and exaggerated fear have been leavened by experience. Easy rhetoric has been replaced by excessively long workdays. As teacher centers have taken form, in concept and actual presence, trust, cooperation, and wisdom have increased. The second year will see "veterans" more effectively operating teacher center sponsored inservice.

Documentation has been a rewarding but difficult experience for the Northwest Cluster of projects. While intended as a facilitating vehicle, documentation was initially viewed as a form of evaluation. Innocent of federal bureaucracy, many of the participants feared the apparent intrusion of outside voyeurs in what were conceived as locally developed and locally controlled projects. This apprehension dissolved as cluster meetings and newsletters created a communication foundation on which trust and sharing could be constructed. As a result the function of documentation has been agreed to, namely to learn from our collective experience. In practice this means that we have agreed to describe what each of the projects is doing. Such description is meant to encompass all activities, be they political or educational, success or failure. Coupled with the descriptive task is the "making sense of it all" task. This dimension has required that we invest time and energy in trying to explain WHY activities take place in each project, assess the value of those activities and use such an analysis as one data base for project improvement. But this book emanates from a larger documentation function, also agreed to by the cluster members, and that is the need for documentation to serve the collective needs of the Northwest projects. We believe that while our projects may be different, by design, they are also similar. We share in common ultimate purposes, drives, activities and types of clients. We can and should learn from each other. Hence we agree to share the results of the individual project documentation activities, engage in common documentation activities and be visited by one documentor in common. This book, DISCOVERING TEACHER CENTERS: THE NORTHWEST PASSAGE, is the result of that sharing, our first attempt at collective meaning-making.

The results of this documentation have been revealing. We share much in common. There are successes and failures. There are trends. There are questions raised, but which remain unanswered. We attempt to address each of these in this book. In essence, then, this book is a recording of our own history. It is our first attempt to discover who we are while we engage in the process of inservice.

The book is divided into three sections. Section I, "A Survey of Teacher Centers in the Northwest," present descriptive material on each of the centers. This descriptive material is important because it forms the basis of what we

have called the "ecology" of teacher centers. By this we mean that the nature of each center is greatly influenced by its cultural and geographic surroundings. Many of the differences among the centers may be explained by such ecological data. The second section, "Trends in the Development of Teacher Centers," suggests basic themes that appear to characterize the growth of centers over the year. These themes we classify into the categories of philosophical, institutional, and programmatic. Both sections I and II are based on documentation reports submitted by centers during the year and on interviews conducted at each site during April and May. The third section, "Issues: A Commentary," represents a sampling of questions and concerns with which we are all grappling. Several cluster members have volunteered to comment on the issues of needs assessment, evaluation, policy board inservice and the role of state departments. The section is introducted by Jack Turner, director of the B.E.S.T. Center, who muses about the finite and the infinite in organizational and professional life. The purpose of this section is to continue the dialogue begun in our cluster newsletters.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The documentor conducted interviews during April and May of this year at each of the eight teacher centers in the Northwest. These interviews provided a principle source of data for this report. Thanks go to the following individuals, who contributed their time and insights to the documentation effort:

1. Northwest Arctic Teacher Center

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2. Teacher Center for Gallatin County

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3. B.E.S.T. Center

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4. Southeast Idaho Teacher Center Consortium

   Bedford Boston, Judy Driscoll, Karen Fraley, Rae Everitt, Jeanne Rose

5. Western Montana Teacher Center

   Bob Lukes, Jan Pisel, Darlene Hjelmseth, Stephen Harris, Willis Curdy, Betty Rude, Mike Bowman, Jon Wiles, and Sister Norella

6. Spokane Teacher Center

   Larry Skillestad, Judy Feryn, Bob Bieker, and Judy Custy

7. Palouse Consortium Teacher Center

   Peggy Larson-Jones and Lisa Hansen

8. Cowlitz Teacher Center

   Jack Bond, Kathy Hegtvedt-Wilson, Lynn Delong, Jan Kukkola, Rick Chisholm, Bill Mortimer, Wayne Lovingfoss, Byron Leeper, Linda Saukkonen

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SECTION I. A SURVEY OF TEACHER CENTERS IN THE NORTHWEST

This section is an introduction to each of the centers in the Northwest. It offers a description of settings, goals, programs, and concerns of the various sites.

A map indicating the location of the centers appears on the following page. Note that the cluster is divided equally between planning and operational grants.

The Centers...

1. Northwest Arctic Teacher Center

Northwest Arctic School District
PO Box 51
Kotzebue, Alaska 99752
Phone (907) 442-3472

Director: Doris Brock

The Northwest Arctic Teacher Center serves just one school district, but it is a district which spans 36,000 miles and eleven communities. Most of the area within the district is north of the Arctic Circle. The region encompasses the Kobuk, Noatak and Selawick Rivers, which flow into Kotzebue sound. About 5,000 people live in the area, in towns ranging in size from 2,500 (Kotzebue) to fewer than 60 (Kobuk). Approximately 85 percent of the population are Inupiaq, or Eskimo.

There are no highways or railroads connecting the communities. Airplanes are by far the most common mode of transportation and supply. During the three summer months, boats and barges operate, but for the rest of the year the region is icebound.

Significantly, each of the individual villages in the region supports its own K-12 comprehensive school. Many of these schools are new and include, often for the first time in a village, complete high school programs. The addition of a high school component in many villages is in part a response to a 1976 court ruling which held that village children must be educated in their own communities, through high school, if they so wish. Even in the "bush," students are offered a wide range of programs.

The teacher center was established in response to the expressed needs of teachers for: (1) a more comprehensive orientation for new faculty to the special rigors of teaching in the region; (2) increased communication with fellow teachers throughout the district; (3) the development of curriculum guidelines; and (4) help in teaching the Inupiaq culture and basic and vocational skills. The teacher center, which is guided by a steering committee of seven members, has developd plans to address each of these needs. During 1978-79, the center helped promote teacher involvement in the construction of curriculum guidelines for each grade and course and sponsored a three day inservice education program in Anchorage. (The center held the program in Anchorage in order to minimize the costs of trainers and hotels and to allow an opportunity for teachers and aides to participate in the State Teachers

TEACHER CENTERS IN THE NORTHWEST

Operational Grants

1. Northwest Arctic Teacher Center, Kotzebue, Alaska
2. Teacher Center for Gallatin County, Bozeman, Montana
3. B.E.S.T. Center (Bethel, Eugene, Springfield), Eugene, Oregon
4. Southeast Idaho Teacher Center Consortium, Twin Falls, Idaho

Planning Grants

5. Western Montana Teacher Center, Missoula, Montana
6. Spokane Teacher Center, Spokane, Washington
7. Palouse Consortium Teacher Center, Colfax, Washington
8. Cowlitz Teacher Center, Kelso, Washington

Association meeting and the Native Education Association conference, which took place immediately after the inservice program.) Workshops were held in areas such as: developing cross-cultural units and courses, intensive Distar language, refresher course in basic Inupiaq grammar, teaching Arctic survival, and small high school program development. In general, the center has focused staff development and inservice programs within the district and has functioned as a clearinghouse through which teachers and aides express their needs.

Salient activities and objectives related to staff development planned for next year* include:

District Wide Educational Fair: August 1979

1. Introduce new teachers to their colleagues around the district and the unique conditions of teaching in Northwest Alaska, help to alleviate culture shock and reduce insecurity.

2. Introduce instructional programs developed by teachers during the 1978-79 school year.

3. Familiarize all instructional staff with the curricular resources and support staff in the district.

4. Provide direct training in priority areas.

5. Facilitate sharing of excellent teaching techniques among experienced rural teachers.

On-Site Assistance

1. Serve as a "Hot Line for Help" to teachers and aides.

2. Reinforce training in the context of the school site.

3. Meet specific individual problems with specific site-related solutions.

4. Reinforce the relationship of isolated village schools with the district as a whole.

District Wide Instructional Caucuses

1. Provide opportunities for small groups of grade-alike or subject-alike teachers to meet, discuss mutual concerns, share ideas, methods and materials.

2. Decrease professional isolation of teachers and aides in small schools.

*Excerpted from the center's continuation grant.

Coordination with School Inservice

1. Assist schools in planning for inservice.

2. Assist schools in conducting inservice.

3. Provide opportunities for teachers at one site to benefit from inservice programs at other sites.

Teacher Exchanges and Travel to Subject Meetings

1. Provide opportunities for teachers and aides to learn from observing promising practices or validated programs in other schools.

2. Provide opportunities for teachers and aides to travel to their subject meetings in the state where it is not practical to incorporate the subject in district programs.

Members of the steering committee of the center expressed two fundamental concerns. One was that people unfamiliar with the region would not properly understand the constraints that the center operated under. Communication and transportation within the district are extremely difficult during much of the year. Phone service between villages is frequently out, and airplane schedules are far from dependable. Simply to convene an area-wide meeting is quite an undertaking. In order for the steering committee members in Deering and Shungnak to attend committee meetings, for example, each has to endure at least an hour plane trip (Munz Northern Airlines departs from these villages just once a day) and must plan on spending the night in Kotzebue. The one hotel in Kotzebue charges $50 + a night. The cost of holding steering committee meetings throughout the year, then, may run over $1,500. Expenses for the district-wide educational fair and for outside consultants are much higher than in other areas of the country.

A second concern is the high teacher turnover in the district. Fully one-third of the faculty must be replaced annually. With such dramatic changes in staff it is tough to develop the area-wide sense of community that many teachers apparently miss. It is hoped that the center's commitment to a systematic initiation of new teachers and an expanded support system will help reduce this problem.

2 The Teacher Center for Gallatin County
615 South Sixteenth Street
Bozeman, Montana 59715
Phone (406) 587-8181

Director: Linda Bardonner

Gallatin County is a rural area. The city of Bozeman contains only 22,000 people yet is by far the largest population center in the region. Schools such as Ophir Elementary are 40 miles from the nearest town. During the winter, county roads, like Flathead Pass, are often impassable, and teachers are apt to take refuge in "teacherages" on school nights. A stable is maintained at the

one-room Malmborg school, for horse and pony are common means of transportation. In the most isolated areas, students must board at school, or suffer a three hour commute each day, if the snow permits travel at all. A nineteenth century commentator once observed in reference at Gallatin County: "Middling people do not live in these regions." From this standpoint, not much has changed in a hundred years.

Although the teacher center does serve teachers in the city of Bozeman, its first priority is to meet the needs of those in the more remote areas of the county. Rural schools have clear and compelling needs in southwestern Montana. Few of these schools have adequate audiovisual equipment, for example. Most lack film projectors, overheads, opaque projectors, tape recorders, thermofax or a photocopier. That the need for equipment is acute seems beyond question. Teachers literally clamor for it.

The Gallatin County teacher center is a resource treasure. The workroom contains two laminators, a ditto and thermofax machine, record player, IBM selectric typewriter, opaque and overhead projectors, folders, cardboard, a variety of papers, magic markers, weaving material, and so on. The data on center use which the staff maintains indicates that hundreds of teachers have availed themselves of the center's riches. And teacher testimonials suggest that the center has become an indispensable aid in curriculum construction and presentation.

In addition to equipment, the center offers information retrieval services (the staff an ERIC searches for a teacher study group in the Gallatin Gateway school concerning student evaluation and report cards, for example), a collection of current texts and teaching aids, and a film library. Linda Bardonner, the Director, or Sally Richter, the full-time demonstration teacher, personally take center resources to rural schools at the periphery of the county. West Yellowstone, for example, is 90 miles from Bozeman and relies on the center's "extension agents" for new materials and ideas.

A key function of the center is to furnish a meeting and sharing place for teachers. If teachers in large systems are insulated from each other by the individualistic culture of the school and the cellular structure of its learning environment, teachers in rural areas are insulated from each other by sheer geographic distance. In a one room school, there simply are no other adults. It is common for teachers in the outlying sections of Bozeman to stop by the center a couple of times a week to see what their teaching brethren are up to and chat about the day's events. New teachers especially tend to rely on the center to meet other teachers at the same grade level and to test ideas. Among many educators in the Gallatin Valley, the center promotes a sense of professional fellowship.

The center also has sponsored numerous workshops, led by teachers themselves or by faculty at Montana State University. (The university has been flexible in granting credit to nontraditional inservice programs.) There have been workshops in lettering, creating learning centers, using the Great Books program, music in education, and eclipse watching. A particularly popular, and ongoing, service is that provided by Judy Tallichet, the center's artist in residence. Judy conducts inservice art education throughout the schools in the county by leading actual art lessons in the teacher's class. The center is not just a place, but a deliverer of innovative inservice.

More elementary teachers participate in center activities than do secondary teachers. Several overtures towards the high schools have, however, been made. Perhaps the most salient is the center's sponsorship of 23 secondary teachers' participation in Montana State University's "Thomas Alva Edison Institute." This is a highly respected science and technology inservice which many teachers could not afford to attend in the past. The center paid their transportation and released time costs. On a more day to day level, the center has filled requests for tapes of literary works, radio tapes, laboratory equipment, Spanish and French tapes, and various curriculum materials. A workshop for secondary home economic teachers in the county reached an audience of 17. Other workshops are in the incubation stage.

Serving the rural areas in the county presents formidable technical problems. To disseminate materials and programs to schools as far as 140 miles apart--miles that are rough going from October to May (as late as April 18, the Bozeman region was battling with heavy snows)--requires a flexible and robust delivery system. The center staff, which includes a full-time office manager/media specialist, Barbara Loomis, exploits existing communication resources whenever possible. In the winter, Linda loads her truck with hay bales and sets out for the hinterlands herself. In the grant proposal for 1979-80, the staff has requested a van to reach the rural areas more effectively.

The center has seen its mission principally in terms of serving the isolated schools in the valley, which up until this time have received virtually no inservice. Plans for coordinating inservice with the Bozeman school system and thereby enlarging its urban teacher clientele are underway.

The center is governed by a policy board consisting of eight teachers, four administrators, and one representative from the university.

3. Bethel-Eugene-Springfield Teacher Center (B.E.S.T.)

North Eugene High School
200 Silver Lane
Eugene, Oregon 97404
Phone (503) 687-3578

Director: Jack Turner

Bethel-Eugene-Springfield is an urban area in Oregon's Willamette Valley. The center's service area ranges over three separate school districts and includes almost 3,000 educators and over 60 buildings.

The B.E.S.T. Center's approach to developing inservice is based largely on the agricultural extension agent model. Characteristics of this model are that the response time to an expressed client need is short, that consultation is done on an informal and individual basis, and that the life span of any consultation is negotiable by both the person asking for help and the person offering it. Guided by this conception, the center seeks to link teachers with the resources, programs, and personnel which bear directly on their individual requests. The center's pattern of response is differentiated and adaptive for no fixed formula could satisfy the diversity of teacher needs.

It should be noted that the B.E.S.T. Center does have specific focus areas that limit the range of requests it fulfills. These focus areas are: (1) gifted

and able, (2) mainstreaming, (3) middle school, and (4) reading instruction. Of the dozens of teacher requests that the center has received, many have fallen clearly outside the focus areas. And a significant number of requests have been difficult to classify definitively as either within or outside the focus areas. The center staff and policy board are in the process of developing sharper criteria for judging the appropriateness of teacher requests.

Although the center's primary commitment is to provide timely, "custom made" responses to individual teacher requests, it has not lost sight of the potential of large group presentations, study/discussion groups, and other more structured and standardized formats. Such formats involve large numbers of people and create an important source of visibility for the center.

The center staff, which consists of an inservice assistant, Cathy Method, as well as the director, publishes a monthly inservice digest. The digest is in table form and indicates the requestee, the date of the request, the needs expressed, the response or respondent, the current status of the request, and the response cost. In the May 2 digest one finds, for example, a teacher's request to learn more about developing a course for junior high gifted students and about gifted testing. The center put the teacher in touch with a fellow teacher at a neighboring junior high whose specialty was the gifted. In addition, the center furnished the teacher with an ERIC search on gifted tests. Another request concerned mainstreaming awareness. The center identified a successful mainstreaming program with in the service area and paid for a sub to enable the teacher to observe it. The center also collected a set of slide/tape productions which explained the implications of PL 94-142. The May digest reveals that a score of individual requests were fulfilled in similar fashion during the four week period.

Perhaps the most dramatic form of inservice that the center designed was "Project Day," which gave teachers in the three cooperating districts a chance to spend a day away from teaching in order to investigate projects or plan programs of special interest to them. B.E.S.T. Center funded 100 substitutes, divided proportionately among the three districts and the private schools in the area. Enthusiasm for Project Day was high. Participants engaged in such pursuits as observing an LDII class at Eugene Hearing and Speech Center, visiting the ESD to research curriculum materials for the gifted, working on plans for a basic language skill resource manual, and developing vocabulary cards and comprehension questions for Holt Reading Levels I. As part of each participant's contract for Project Day there was a requirement to contribute to the center's Resource Information Bank anything the teacher learned that day that might be useful to other teachers.

For the summer B.E.S.T. is planning a series of teacher designed workshops and is offering minigrants to teachers for educational research and development.

At the time of this writing approximately 300 teachers, or 10 percent of the educators in the three districts, have participated in center sponsored activities.

In providing for this inservice, the center staff has had to spend a great deal of time in meetings with the administrators of the three cooperating districts. Not only does each district maintain distinct regulations regarding use of substitute teachers and buildings, etc., but each has its own tradition of

inservice and its own focus for staff development. For example, all three districts support their own gifted programs. There are at least 30 administrators who must be considered when planning large scale center projects. Fortunately, administrators in each of the school systems have been cooperative and encouraging. The task of relating creatively to the many different regulations, schedules, and orientations has nonetheless been exacting and time consuming.

The center is governed by a 17-member policy board. Eleven of the members are teachers from the three districts and the private schools. The other six members represent the administrators of the public school districts, the University of Oregon College of Education, Lane Community College and the community.

As reported in the February documentation summary, the policy board recognized early in the year that the large size of the Board membership required members to communicate in a different way than is possible with a small informal board. There was consensus that communication patterns and expectations needed to be clarified in order to promote effective policy making. With the aid of a consultant in organizational development, who worked with the board and staff from January through May, the board has become a cohesive unit. Many board members revealed in interviews that they looked forward to attending teacher center board meetings more than any others.

The key concerns that have emerged are in the definition and application of the focus areas and in the implementation of the needs assessment. With respect to focus areas, some wonder if it would be appropriate to expand the categories to include offerings in personal development as well as instructional skill building. Others have asked if there should be a system for prioritizing teacher requests within the focus areas rather than relying on what is essentially a first come, first serve approach. The center's phones are continually ringing with teacher requests, so the issue of selection criteria often arises.

The center has conducted a sequence of needs assessment surveys, but the return rate has been disappointing. Even when the survey was mailed to teachers' homes and accompanied by a personalized cover letter, only 30 percent of the sample responded.

4. Southeast Idaho Teacher Center Consortium

1300 Kimberly Road
Twin Falls, Idaho 83301
Phone (208) 734-6911

Director: Bedford Boston

To help orient readers to the Southeast Idaho Teacher Center Consortium, Dr. Robert Lerch, of the College of Education at Idaho State University, has submitted to the documentation cluster an extensive and multidimensional description of the center's service area. Due to space considerations we have distilled Doctor Lerch's description into the summary below.

The Southeast Idaho Teacher Center area is a geographical region bounded by Wyoming border, including Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks on the

east, the Utah-Nevada border on the south, the Montana border on the north, and a line from Nevada to Montana through the general area of Bliss, Idaho, on the west.

The center's service area is the largest in the Northwest. It approximates a square, 250 miles on a side. It is larger in area than 16 of the 50 states and encompasses 42,000 square miles. The area includes 53 school districts, fully one half of the districts in the state, and one half of Idaho's teachers and students. To say that this service area is large is to speak in understatement.

The majority of the region is rural, composed of small towns and vast agricultural, mountain, and desert areas. Included in this region as well are three urban centers: Twin Falls, Pocatello and Idaho Falls, which range up to 50,000 in population.

The eastern Idaho area was originally settled by Mormon families moving north to colonize and settle the region close to the headquarters of the Mormon church in Salt Lake City, some 100 miles south of the Idaho-Utah border. The Mormon influence remains strong to this day.

In addition to the Mormons there are Oriental groups whose ancestors came to the area originally as "gandy dancers" and railroad construction workers. More recently, groups of Spanish speaking immigrants have come to the area as migrant farm laborers, and many have remained on a permanent basis. Finally, the area supports a sizeable population of native Americans; the Bannock/Shoshone Indian Reservation is in the middle of the region.

. . . . . .

This vast geographic area has an impressive history of cooperation in inservice. In 1970 the 53 districts joined into a consortium to promote inservice training for teachers. This lead to a project prosaically entitled, "Teachers for the Rural World." The project brought national attention and won one of the top five awards from AACTE as a program for teacher excellence. Following this project was a Teacher Corps effort involving ten school districts scattered across the entire geographic area. Collaborative boards were created involving teachers, community representatives, parents, students, higher education, administrators, and special representatives of minorities.

The Southeast Idaho Teacher Center Consortium builds upon the foundation laid by these earlier projects. To do this, it has, like the B.E.S.T. Center, adapted the agricultural extension agent model.

The extension, or "field," agent idea is key to the center's operation. Three half-time field agents link the center with the outer reaches of the service area. Each agent is responsible for a different region. The agents are all highly experienced teachers who have held administrative or consulting positions as well. Each has the task of publicizing the center in the many districts (about 20 in each case) in her region, of identifying "high priority" districts (those which have solid data on student needs, but little or no inservice), conducting personal, face-to-face needs assessments of teachers, training teachers to serve as liaisons in each building, who will serve as the "arms and legs" of the center in particular schools, and arranging for workshops, teacher demonstrations, consultants, or university course credit.

In keeping with the agricultural extension model the agents seek to widen the decision-making role of the client (teacher) in establishing problem areas and solution requirements. All inservice is planned cooperatively with the particular populations being served. University professors, for example, cannot give a "canned" lecture to recipients of teacher center courses. Even if the standard lecture approach seems appropriate, the professor must show that he, or she, has adapted it for the new group. A special emphasis of the center is the creation of at least three alternative proposals for each inservice request. The center has established a talent bank of consultants, teachers, community members, businessmen, journalists, and others who might be enlisted in the inservice cause. Talent banks maintained by several other institutions are also at the center's disposal. When a request is made, the center tries to generate the names of three people or agencies that might be of value. Clients are thus provided with options.

To promote broad based representation within each region in the service area, the center has established regional planning councils. These councils are made up of the field agent for the region and twenty to twenty-five teachers, each representing one of the districts within the region.

The center places much emphasis on personalized needs assessment, a process referred to as "professional development needs/priorities process." This approach does not use conventional, paper and pencil surveys. The field agents meet personally with groups of eight or more. They first stimulate the awareness of needs through guided visualization of the teachers' students, classroom and schools. A large array of professional development activity topics are presented on posters or signs affixed by masking tape to the walls. The teachers are then asked to write on 3 x 5 cards their professional development needs--one item per card. They do this as individuals, and when they have finished they rank each card on a scale of 1 to 5. After the ranking process, the teachers form small groups of four or five and eliminate duplicates by sharing and discussing their cards. All duplicate cards are bound together yielding a total score for all of the cards in that particular category. The center has found that this activity is especially worthwhile because it promotes "a great deal of interpersonal sharing and clarification about professional development needs, and it yields a discreet list of professional development needs in rank order."

The center has devoted most of its energy this first year to creating the organizational structures necessary to carry out its model of responsive inservice. The director and the field agents meet at least once every six weeks to assure overall coordination and to review progress. Recently, the center has begun to deliver inservice in light of the results of professional development needs assessments.

The center is governed by a policy board consisting of 21 members: 11 teachers, 3 representatives from higher education, 3 school districts, 3 community representatives, and 1 superintendent.

THE PLANNING GRANTS (descriptions for these grants will be somewhat shorter than for the operational grants.)

5. Western Montana Teacher Center

301 West Alder
Missoula, Montana 59801
Phone (406) 721-1620

Director: Robert Lukes

Like the Southeast Idaho Center, the Western Montana Center has a large service area, which includes over ten counties. The center has concentrated its attention in Missoula County, the population center of the area, but plans on gradually offering services to outlying regions next year.

As reported in the February documentation summary, a major accomplishment of the center in the first half of the year was completion of an extensive needs assessment survey and analysis. The center's plans have grown directly out of the assessment data.

The center policy board, which consists of 20 members, has established the basic orientation of the center for this coming operational year. The center will be:

1. A place with

   a. subject matter resources
   b. a professional library
   c. all types of information

2. A place where

   a. teachers can construct materials
   b. teachers can obtain technical help
   c. teachers can talk to other teachers
   d. teachers can relax
   e. teachers can participate in recreation
   f. teachers can learn
   g. teachers can share

3. A place that

   a. belongs to teachers
   b. responds to teacher's wants and needs

The center is committed to addressing the top twenty needs expressed in the needs assessment. These needs include both instructional skill building and personal development. Teachers asked for training in individualized instruction, small group instruction, the inquiry technique, team teaching as well as for counseling services, preparation for an adaptation to retirement, rap sessions, a recreation center, community social services and legal service information. The center will link teachers with the legal, social, and counseling resources they request. The policy board is also seeking gymnasium space that

can be made available during weekends and evenings to intersted teachers. In addition to providing workshops, consultants, and curriculum materials, the center is thus intent on accommodating personal, social, and recreational needs. The focus areas are far-reaching.

Staff and board members were concerned about issues of compliance with federal regulations, specifically those relating to contracting for services for next year. For example, the center very much wants to rent a building suitable for its purposes, but the regulations prohibit this until funding for the operational year is formally approved. In the meantime, the center goes without an appropriate home and planning for the future is constrained.

6. Spokane Teacher Center

West 825 Spokane Falls Boulevard
Spokane, Washington 99201
Phone (509) 455-3666

Coordinator: Larry Skillestad

The city of Spokane is the second largest city in Washington with a population of 190,000. Spokane serves as a transportation, shopping, cultural and medical center for the million people who live in the areas of Eastern Washington, Northern Idaho, Western Montana, and Southeastern British Columbia, Canada.

The policy board currently consists of 14 members including: eight public school teachers, one nonpublic school teacher, four administrators, and one member representing institutions of higher education. Upon approval of the operational grant, the board will be expanded to 19 members.

The board has worked long hours in developing the center's bylaws and planning its program. The bylaws are nine pages in length and provide explicit and specific guidelines for the center's operation. The board and staff have reviewed a wide body of research in the area of teacher effectiveness and staff development and summarized this research in the operational grant proposal. This research has been integrated with the results of a recent series of needs assessments conducted by Spokane School District 81. On this firm research foundation, the center has identified four curriculum focus areas and constructed a model for inservice deliver. The focus areas are: (1) teaching strategies and tactics; (2) classroom management; (3) instructional advisory service; and (4) individual instructional materials.

The board has also made provisions for developing an assessment and evaluation component and an information and dissemination section.

The four focus areas and the assessment-evaluation and the information-dissemination sections represent the center's six "subsystems." The board intends to establish a chair of each of the six groups and will work with the coordinator to coordinate the groups' efforts. Each subsystem group will draw upon the talents of expert consultants as they develop the areas for which they are responsible.

The center has requested funding for five full-time positions during the operational year: a coordinator, a consultant, who will work with the subsystems, two teaching specialists, and a secretary.

At the time of this writing a specific site for the teacher center had not been designated. The center had narrowed the field to three buildings, each of which contains a large multipurpose room.

One question that several board members entertained concerned the relationship between the district's inservice program and that to be sponsored by the teacher center. Especially since this was a year for negotiating a new contract with the district, there was a strong possibility that the district would alter its traditional inservice offerings. How this might affect the teacher center's program was not yet clear.

7. Palouse Consortium Teacher Center

Colfax, Washington 99111
Phone (509) 397-2181

Director: Peggy Larson-Jones

The Palouse Consortium encompasses nine school districts within Whitman County, a rural region in central Washington south of Spokane.

Like the Spokane Center, the Palouse Consortium Center has integrated the results of teacher needs assessment surveys and outcome data on student achievement in the county's schools to justify its selection of four focus areas: (1) gifted (top quartile, defined in terms of a composite of several measures); (2) motivation of students (defined in terms of both theory and research on the psychology of motivation and instructional strategies designed to engage motivation), (3) teacher made materials; and (4) the low performing student (again, defined in terms of a composite measure involving both test scores and teachers' professional judgment.

The people interviewed at the center during May indicated that the center would function mainly as a linking agent for teachers in the field. Although no explicit mention was made of the "agricultural extension agent" model, the orientation of the center seems to be most consistent with this approach. The center has already taken steps to develop ties with the Office of Public Instruction, with the Spokane and local educational service districts, and with Washington State University and the University of Idaho. The center is primed to tap these sources, among others, to meet teacher requests. Both the director, Peggy Larson-Jones, and Lisa Hansen, another key actor in the center's operation, believe strongly that the center should strive to meet specific individual problems with specific site-related solutions. The approach to inservice is varied and flexible.

Like the Idaho Center, Palouse maintains clear and stringent criteria for sponsoring university courses. A professor from Washington State University, for example, offered a course entitled, "Seminar on Inservice," for teachers who wanted to develop curriculum in the focus areas of the center. The center arranged for the course and required that the professor submit his notes and plans to the policy board well before the final go ahead was given. The course was well received, and a number of teachers had their first experience in self-initiated educational research and development.

Both Peggy and Lisa are members of the Teacher Center-Teacher Corps Consortium, based at WSU. (Representatives from the Spokane Teacher Center also

participated in the Consortium.) Teacher Corps received a $9,000 grant to investigate ways of pooling the talents and resources of the two organizations. This is the only such grant in the country.

In order to help assure a high quality of inservice, the center has contracted with the Audit and Evaluation Program of the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory to conduct an evaluation. An evaluation blueprint has been developed.

Finally, it might be noted that the planning grant did not allocate any funds for salaries. Those who performed the staff functions did so while holding down full time teaching positions. Needless to say, this was not easy.

8. Cowlitz Teacher Center

8th and Church
Kelso, Washington 98626
Phone (206) 577-2400

Developer: Jack Bond

Composition of Policy Board:

Teachers.....10 (5 each from Kelso and Longview)
Administrators ... 4 (2 each from Kelso and Longview)
Private schools... 1

Total.....15

As noted in the February documentation summary, the Cowlitz Teacher Center is the only center in the Northwest which has no affiliation with an institution of higher learning. The center is 75 miles from the nearest in-state four-year learning college and 200 miles from the nearest in-state college specializing in teacher preparation. The need for locally based and readily accessible inservice thus seemed particularly pressing in the Cowlitz area and was a major reason for the creation of the center.

This is not to suggest that the center views itself merely as a surrogate university. Unlike many traditional university programs, the center seeks to reinforce professional training in the context of the school site and to enlist the talents of area-wide teachers in the design and delivery of inservice. As the first edition of the periodic publication of the center, News and Notes, stated, programs sponsored by the center "can deal with practicalities and strategies used in the classroom, and not so much with theory. Center lessons can be specifically designed for local teachers." In the Cowlitz model, inservice is to be responsive to teachers' expressed needs.

As a result of an extensive needs assessment, the center is addressing ten specific program focus areas for its first operational year:

Serving Gifted Students
Developing Inquiry Processes
Developing Peer Relationships
Reading, Spelling, and Composition
Establishing Learning Centers
Student Discipline
Art Discipline
Developing Problem-Solving Skills
Developing Communication Skills
Values Clarification

Another objective defines an open-ended category of meeting the "special needs and concerns of small groups of teachers and administrators as these are identified."

In addition to developing an inservice model for the operational year, the center has laid a foundation of interagency cooperation to support the implementation of the model. The center has been recognized by nine higher education institutions, six education associations, six school districts, four private schools, and several community and statewide agencies providing educational services. Perhaps of special significance is the role of the center in fostering collaboration between the two sponsoring school districts. The districts are geographic neighbors, but have rarely coordinated inservice efforts.

Plans and arrangements are being worked out by which the cooperating colleges and universities will offer courses through the center which meet the identified needs of area teachers. Universities currently offer extension programs and courses in the area, but admissions procedures for these programs are often cumbersome and subject to meeting local minimum enrollments. Issues concerning on-campus requirements for master's programs, out-of-state tuition costs (Portland State University, in neighboring Oregon, is only 40 miles away), and the maintenance of a support library resource for the offered graduate courses have yet to be resolved.

One concern that developed during the first year was the lack of representation of high school teachers on the policy board. To remedy this problem, the policy board appointed a special secondary teacher committee to address high school concerns. For the coming year, three new appointments to the policy board have been made to increase the ratio of secondary teachers.

Several board members have expressed concern about their unfamiliarity with federal and state regulations and procedures relating to grants, personnel, and inservice. These members felt a sense of accomplishment in learning to deal with these requirements, as well as with local district and building administrative issues. They indicated the learning process took time, was often demanding, and delayed action they might have taken in policy board matters.

The technical assistance and leadership provided by the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction in the state has been frequent and of consistent high quality. By contrast, the support from regional and national groups has been frustrating and confusing. This frustration seems to come from a "lack of definite direction" from the "Cluster," "National Documentation," and "Teacher Center Project." These organizations have not made their objectives clear in relation to individual centers; communications are infrequent, ever changing, and lack follow-through; and requirements to conduct documentation or to attend meetings appear to have been imposed after grant negotiations without sufficient explanation or financial support. Leadership at these levels has been disappointing.

SECTION II: TRENDS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF TEACHER CENTERS

This section focuses on general issues and principles that appear to cut across individual teacher centers in the region. The intent is to generate conclusions about the dynamics of teacher center development over the year.

To help make sense out of the large quantity of data that the centers have provided, we have organized our observations in terms of three categories: the philosophical, the institutional, and the programmatic. The philosophical refers to the overall point of view about the meaning and purpose of teacher centers. Data bearing on the underlying orientation of centers is treated in this category. The institutional refers to issues concerning the centers' operating norms and roles and relations with other organizations. Governance, politics, and administration are included here. Finally, the programmatic dimension relates to the type of inservice centers sponsor. Of course, in practice these three categories are interrelated. A center cannot decide questions about its program, for example, in isolation from philosophical and institutional considerations. Nonetheless, these categories may help create initial paths of understanding through the mass of otherwise unorganized data.

The Philosophic Dimension

The philosophy of teacher centers concerns the fundamental reasons for their creation--the "why" of teacher centers. Documentation reports and interviews invariably included substantial philosophic statements. Taken as a whole, these statements reflect a vision of developing professional autonomy, community and effectiveness.

Autonomy

The theme of autonomy runs through all the documentation material. Center board members and staff commonly pointed to teacher centers as the most promising vehicle for promoting teacher self-direction and self-initiation. Many of those interviewed drew a contrast between traditional approaches to staff development and the orientation of teacher centers. Whereas school districts had often adopted a "mass feeding" form of inservice, which treated teachers as dependent and undifferentiated laborers, teacher centers had faith that teachers could work together to assess their own needs and generate their own solutions. The unilateral, "top-down," approach to inservice had been antithetical to the development of professional autonomy, many claimed. Indeed, if anything, it had reinforced professional inertia. Teacher centers gave credence to teachers' own version of professional effectiveness. They enfranchised teachers in the process of inservice decision making. They enabled teachers to have ownership in their own professional development. Teacher centers fostered independent self-renewal. They planned with teachers rather than for them.

As one teacher board member put it: "The teacher center is the best thing that's happened for teachers in a long time. With it we can prove to ourselves and to administrators that we can do things in a leadership capacity. The center is a real boost to us as professionals."

Several teacher center participants said they believed in the ultimate goal of autonomy, but wondered about teachers' ability to lead, at least in the short run. One respondent noted that teacher board members "tended not to come

prepared for meetings. They didn't do the necessary reviewing of documents or agendas. They often just didn't do their homework." With respect to policy making, their decisions were commonly "spur of the moment," this individual maintained. Moreover, teachers were apt to "base decisions on their own personal experience rather than on the needs assessment or on research." From this point of view, autonomy was surely a valued end, but it could not be defined simply in terms of teachers' own sense of need fulfillment. Centers that funded any request that a teacher made may merely be promoting teacher aggressiveness, rather than autonomy, noted a policy board member at another center. Whoever could get to the center phone first was rewarded, it seemed to him. If a "go-getting" attitude was the mark of autonomy, then the center stood for autonomy. But such a criteria would be delusionary, the board member implied.

Talk about teacher autonomy, then, often revolved around the question of who, or what, is the legitimate definer of teacher needs. To endorse autonomy is to suggest that teachers themseleves are the final judges of their own needs. Yet it is far from clear how one knows a "true" need when one meets one. An elementary teacher in an urban area confided, for example, that she wasn't sure to what extent her view of her professional needs resulted from the principal's pronouncements, her educational texts, pressures from the community, or her own original reflection. Autonomy presupposes a large measure of self-clarity. To plan for oneself one must know oneself. Some centers appear to assume that teachers have already attained the level of self-insight necessary for professional self-determination. In these cases, the center provides a means for meeting whatever needs teachers communicate by phone, interview or survey. In other centers, there is a more active and deliberate attempt to promote teacher self-reflection. In the Southeast Idaho Center, for example, substantial time is devoted to sessions in "PDP," professional needs development prioritizing. In these sessions center staff meet with groups of teachers on a face-to-face level and engage in structured activities to elicit teachers' goal hierarchies. Here the center stimulates self-reflection, rather than assumes it.

A commitment to autonomy suggest a trust in teachers' perception of reality. All centers share this trust, but some fortify it with deliberate, need-clarification programs. Perhaps the issue is less one of philosophy than of strategy. People agree on the importance of autonomy, but differ in their interpretations of how best to represent or develop it.

Community

The image of teacher centers as engines of autonomous development is not the only image that the documentation literature suggests. Equally as central is the vision of the center as a builder of community.

In the context of teacher centers the idea of community contains two dimensions. First, on the literal level, it means gathering together with other teachers. This kind of community is most evident in rural areas, where professional isolation is a gnawing problem. A second type of community is that of collaborative work. Here the image is one of teachers teaching other teachers, of observing and consulting with peers, of mutual planning and decision making. Teachers may work in the same district or building for years without attaining this form of community. Teacher centers seek to promote both kinds of community.

In rural areas, the Northwest Arctic or Montana's Gallatin Valley, for example, many teachers miss a sense of colleagueship simply because of the distance that separates them from their fellow teachers. Although there are only a few one room schools, even in a six or eight room school there may be no other teacher who shares your subject area and grade level. As Ed Hengemuehler, of the Malmborg School, in Montana (which does happen to be a one room school house) put it:

> I like to drop in the center just to visit and chat with other teachers. Other organizations in town are kind of cold. With them, it's like walking into a meeting, sitting on a chair for an hour, then leaving. But, at the center I can have a real conversation. It's a supportive place...a touch of home... Those of us who teach in one room schools are with the kids all day long. There's no faculty lounge where we get to talk to other teachers. The center goes a long way toward filling this need.

The Northwest Arctic Center also strives to overcome isolation and build community. This is no small effort, since some villages are separated by 100 miles of tundra, and planes, however indispensable, are not inexpensive. Through events such as the Anchorage Fair, teachers get an opportunity to identify with the district as a whole and meet colleagues in neighboring communities.

Even in more urban areas, policy board members commonly envisioned the center as a relaxed, downhome kind of place where teachers could take informal courses in such areas as guitar playing and other arts. In the eyes of many, the center should encourage social and recreational activities, as well as more curriculum oriented programs. The center would help foster a sense of community by becoming a teacher's home away from home. An intimate and comfortable setting would help teachers share each other's experience.

But a center can be committed to building community without explicitly providing a common gathering place. To develop a community of work, of mutual professional exchange, does not necessarily entail the maintenance of a nuturing teacher home. Centers such as B.E.S.T. and Southeast Idaho, which use a brokerage model of inservice, provide teachers with resources to create their own networks of community. The center, in this conception, enables teachers to visit and consult with other teachers and to plan workshops, research and other projects together. Here again, we enter the realm of programs, which we discuss more fully below. On a philosophic plane, we need merely note that teachers working together is a hallmark of the teacher center movement.

Effectiveness

The idea of teachers teaching teachers brings into focus a third basic philosophic theme, that of effectiveness. Most all center participants have faith that the distinctive kinds of services that the center provides will have a discernable payoff in terms of improving the quality of classroom instruction. The rationale of effectiveness holds that centers will make a difference in the lives of children as well as teachers. Indeed, in the eyes of many, including perhaps the federal government, the ultimate justification of a teacher center is its ability to promote student learning. Autonomy and community are not

merely ends in themselves, but means towards developing more competent instructors. Classrooms should be better places because of teacher centers. The outcomes of centers must be viewed in relation to student effects in addition to teacher effects. Considered on the broadest level, teacher centers are seen as serving the public interest at large, and not simply the interests of teachers.

Of course, it is presumed that satisfying teacher needs will benefit students too, either directly or indirectly. The challenge, as administrators in particular noted, is to turn this presumption into a workable research or evaluation hypothesis. Most board members and staff suggested that reseach-type rigor was neither feasible nor desirable in evaluating the effects of the center. There was widespread recognition that a center would have to invest an intolerably high proportion of its budget to test the effects of the center on student learning. Even with financial support, establishing experimental controls and purifying treatments would not be possible without sacrificing the flexibility and individuality of the program's offerings. What centers could do, one board member observed, was to make reasonable inferences about the degree of teacher use of the center and about the relation between the center's focus areas and the assessed needs of students. Several centers, such as Spokane and Palouse, appear to have tied their focus areas to the results of studies on student instructional needs. But this approach to establishing focus areas is not without its own limitations. As the director of both the B.E.S.T. and Western Montana centers pointed out, centers may be doing a disservice to their clients if they restrict the focus areas to curriculum areas, narrowly conceived. For this is to leave out the whole range of human potential programs, of creative psychological development, which teachers may request and benefit from. One would be hard pressed to demonstrate a connection between workshops on such topics as self-awareness and coping with stress and changes in student behavior. But should this mean that centers ought to limit their vision to the more obviously instruction-related areas? To answer this is to revisit the issue of autonomy and who is the legitimate definer of teacher needs.

Some centers plan on sponsoring recreational activities, and perhaps even renting gym space and reserving facilities at health spas. These programs are even one step further removed from a strict conception of inservice for instructional effectiveness, and the criteria for judging their merits are unclear. Several board members suggested that recreational activities might help renew teachers' enthusiasm for their work. Others saw these activities as a means to publicize the center and attract clients to the more fundamental, skill-training programs. In either case, the relation of recreation to professional effectiveness remains indirect, at best.

One teacher center actor suggested that the complexity of assessing the effects of centers on student learning, or even on classroom process, was too often used as an excuse to do no research at all. From this individual's perspective, more money ought to have been earmarked to "conduct interventions." In the long run, unless we can isolate the particular strategies and programs that produce the effects we want we won't know what to make of teacher centers, this argument ran. Teacher centers are in danger of becoming just another educational bandwagon. The worth of centers cannot stand or fall on teacher testimonials, or so it seemed to this respondent. A teacher's feeling of satisfaction with center services is insufficient grounds to establish the merit of

these services. Self-report is one important criterion, but it cannot properly be the final arbiter of success.

In the context of the documentation report it would be inappropriate to probe further the assumptions underlying the alternative positions regarding teacher effectiveness. Like the debate concerning the meaning and measurement of autonomy, the conflict hinges on opposing epistemological positions. The phenomenologically minded board members and staff are apt to legitimize teachers' own perceptions of effectiveness, whereas the more objectivist oriented participants reserve their respect for scientific measures.

All centers support the ends of autonomy, community, and effectiveness. What is perhaps more noteworthy, however, is the range of interpretations that people place on each of these ends. It is not enough to say that teacher centers rest on a belief in autonomy, community, or effectiveness. It is the way in which people develop and use these beliefs that must be explored.

The Institutional Dimension

In this category we consider the organizational and political issues that teacher centers in the Northwest have confronted. It is in this realm that many centers have encountered their most serious problems and enjoyed their most satisfying progress.

All centers seem to have met with at least five basic institutional challenges:

1. Building a stable and cohesive policy board
2. Finding a suitable director, coordinator, or developer
3. Communicating with diverse constituencies (including data gathering and sharing and public relations)
4. Dealing with federal, state, district and building regulations
5. Creating an adequate support staff

1. Building a stable and cohesive policy board

At the outset we should note that for several centers, principally those in rural areas, policy board development was not an issue at all. In these centers, board members seemed to act as one virtually from the beginning, or such was the claim, and any differences were resolved openly and easily. Board meetings were as much gatherings of friends as forums for debate. When asked about board conflicts, several members wondered what this question could possibly mean, as if conflict were a stranger to their region of the world.

In urban based centers, competition for influence and control among groups on the board was more evident. There are invariably more subcultures to unite in these centers than in their rural counterparts, or at least more rigidly defined ones. Although there are cleavages between administrator and teacher in rural settings, these are shallow when compared with the role divisions characteristic or urban areas. In one urban center a board member declared bluntly: "I am an _____ Association member first and a board member second." The only reason the teachers on the board could work with the administration representatives was that "we (the teachers)

have the majority vote." To combat what appeared as the district's drive for control, the teachers on this board had organized themselves into a caucus. The caucus leader would commonly call "time out" during board meetings so that teachers could huddle and plan tactics. The teachers strove to present a solid, united front. This individual respondent readily conceded that she would like to move beyond this state of political warfare and "to see the day when members could act as individuals." But, from her viewpoint, that day had clearly not yet come. Teachers "are paranoid. We've been hurt too many times by the district. Yes, we do jockey for position..."

In the service area of another center, a high ranking school official, who himself was not on the enter policy board, drove the political point home with equal force, but this time from the administrative side:

> Administrators on the whole are put off by the center... The district is to have responsibility without authority... A small group of teachers made an effort to get our name on the dotted line... The center concept was born out of a movement of teacher unions, a push by unions, to put into the hands of teachers control over areas that have traditionally been the prerogative and responsibilities of management. In effect, the feeling seemed to be that the center would let us work around those bad guys.

This official suggested that a number of administrators in the district "feared that the center would interfere, or be incompatible, with inservice programs we already have." The respondent himself questioned openly whether the district needed the center: "The teacher center doesn't really serve our needs in _____. It can serve the rural schools... There's a fear that it will be a foreign element in the system that may not be compatible with it."

This image of the teacher center as a usurper of district prerogatives grew in large part out of the early history of the center, the administrator acknowledged, rather than with its current status. He had utter trust in the center's leadership at this point and felt that they had taken significant steps to work collaboratively with the district. When talking about prospects for future coordination, the official softened considerably. Yet, his position was nonetheless that the center could never be more than a piecemeal operation, "an auxiliary service," which had no systematic impact on the design of inservice in the district.

In this politicized context, policy board development involves confrontation and negotiation. Administrators pose such questions as: Who has the final say over the center's hiring policies? Why should the district share its inservice expertise and resources? What's the center's relations with the teachers' association? Will the center cause us more headaches in terms of scheduling changes, release time, and so forth than its worth?

Not all urban centers are places of political ferment. One urban-based director reported that his biggest surprise was how consistently encouraging and accommodating the administration had been during the year. At this center, the policy board had had its share of internal divisions, but

these were not due to any radical polarization between teachers and administrators. The conflicts seemed to have been based more on the newness of the center idea, and the lack of guiding precedents for this kind of board. One administrator on the board observed that all board members were disposed to work together and "make this thing go" right from the beginning, but that individuals were unsure of themselves in this new situation and began to "assume false positions," as if they were responding to an unnatural script. In this person's view, board members would fall back on stereotypic union or administration positions without necessarily believing in them. Gradually though, due to the leadership provided by the director, the talents of the process consultant, and the commitment of the members themselves the board had become cohesive and effective.

The development of policy boards often reflected the initial procedures used to select board members. In one center, the teachers' association of one of the cooperating districts appointed the entire membership of the "Improvement of Instruction" committee to the policy board. The teachers' association of the sister district appointed individuals, who had no previous committee affiliation. The board members who were also serving on the instruction committee of the association found it difficult to do justice to both assignments. Moreover, the different approach to board selection in the two districts made more difficult, one respondent noted, the achievement of board unity.

In another center, high turnover in board membership during the early stages delayed progress in creating board solidarity. In yet another center, the main problem had been one of geography and climate. Board members had to travel long distances, often in minimally acceptable driving conditions, to attend meetings. Each policy board faced its own challenges.

Policy board development is certainly one of the more fundamental features of the history of teacher centers. Most of what has been written here is based on interviews conducted in April or May, when the strains of policy board development had either been largely worked through or had gone underground in anticipation of the close of the school year. People expressed their perceptions from the perspective of hindsight. This perspective is valuable in that it offers a broad, historical view of policy board operation. The limitation of this perspective is, however, that the immediacy and often the richness of the experience are lost. People don't always remember the details of policy board relations in the developmental stages, or the way in which they felt about them.

2. Finding a suitable director, coordinator, or developer

The issue here seems to be mainly one of locating an individual who is both a crack administrator and a respected classroom teacher. Needless to say, this is a tall order to fill. In many centers, teachers expect the director to be "one of them," but at the same time to be expert at writing grants, dealing with regulations, maintaining the budget, establishing relations with other agencies, and so forth. The director must combine many talents.

Centers may require months to find the "right" person for the job, as did the B.E.S.T. and the northwest Arctic centers. The process of selecting a director might involve board members in dozens of hours of painstaking work. New centers should perhaps be forewarned about the complexity of the director's role and the care required to identify suitable candidates.

If there is one message that directors themselves communicate it is that the director's role is extremely demanding, particularly in regard to handling the many regulations and policies of the cooperating districts, the state, and the federal government. As the director of the B.E.S.T. center put it, there is a vast amount of "invisible time" spent on administrative functions, invisible in the sense that it is hidden from the view of the teachers who use the center's services or others who might seek to appraise its progress. Setting up one workshop may require hours of meeting time and phone calls. Directors do not appear to have as much time available for working with teachers in the field as some teachers would expect.

3. Communicating with diverse constituencies

This is one of the tasks that directors generally perform. It involves both public relations and data gathering and sharing.

In this category falls needs assessment. We have already discussed several of the issues related to needs assessment, but here we might point out that centers commonly experience low returns when conducting a standardized needs survey. In urban areas in particular the response rate to such surveys rarely exceeds 30 percent and among secondary teachers the response is significantly lower. Small schools report much higher response rates.

A center's use of paper-and-pencil survey instruments does not necessarily mean that it believes the survey is the most meaningful source of insight into the needs of teachers in the area. All centers affirm the importance of face-to-face, personalized, needs assessment as well. But in large systems, where several thousand teachers must be served, it is difficult to satisfy the requirement of representativeness by relying exclusively on face to face assessment. If a center wants to create focus areas in light of the needs of 3,000 teachers, and it has only a month or two to create such areas, a standardized survey format assures a wider sampling of perceptions than does an individualized interview format. The quality of data from the survey may be far from optimal, but every teacher at least is given a chance to have input. This is not to promote surveys, but only to explain why many centers used them even though aware of their shortcomings.

The most direct form of needs assessment is the teacher's phone call. Many centers use an initial survey to establish the focus areas, but the most compelling profile of teacher needs is that obtained by the log of teacher requests. Here one gets a specific sense of the kinds of themes and formats teachers are interested in.

As reported in the first section of this report several centers drew upon the needs assessments conducted by the cooperating district. Data concerning both teacher needs and student needs are tapped. In this respect, district support has been crucial.

On the level of public relations, most centers have created "awareness presentations" of one sort or another to introduce various constituencies to the center's programs. Staff members have made presentations to groups of faculty, administrators, and representatives of the community. On a formal level at least, centers generally report that these presentations are well-received, although occasionally teachers, particularly high school teachers, react with indifference.

Centers indicate that the most effective way of promoting their programs is by word of mouth. All centers publish, or plan on publishing, a bulletin, but this seems to carry less weight in the minds of teachers than the observations that their colleagues communicate informally.

4. Dealing with federal, state, district, and building regulations

Dealing with the "regs," of one agency or another, consumes much of a director's week. Policy board members, too, are often preoccupied with the legal and administrative aspects of the center's operation. In this domain, such questions have arisen as:

> How do you get through to the "Feds?" They don't seem to answer the phone or respond to letters.
>
> Washington doesn't want us to rent space. But we need it. What arrangements can be made to satisfy the law, but still secure a site?
>
> The regs say that the majority of board members must be full time teachers. If a teacher takes a study leave or works for the teachers' association for a quarter, does that mean he, or she, must be replaced by an actively practicing teacher? If so, how soon must the substitution be made?
>
> If the center awards minigrants to teachers, does the federal government own the equipment that teachers purchase in carrying out the grants?
>
> How can a center contract for services or materials when the grant has yet to be approved?
>
> Can the center give an independent service contract to consultants or teachers who lead workshops or do these personnel need to be considered employees of the cooperating district and "put on their books," subject to their tax and accounting procedures?
>
> Why did the grant funds arrive three months late, and how do we deal with this kind of delay?
>
> Why are we required to, or at least expected to, conduct documentation for three different groups?
>
> What, exactly, is the state supposed to be doing for us? What does "technical assistance" mean in practice?

Some of these questions are simply technical in nature. The problem is solved by consulting with the budget officer, reading the regulations more carefully, or hearing from the project director in D.C. Clear and reliable information is all that is required.

But in certain instances the regulations are problematic because of the political context in which they are interpreted and applied. For example, one center had fought with the state over the goals and methods of technical assistance. The conflict had not resulted simply from a lack of information, although that may have been a contributing factor. The issue was one of control. Who decides what kind of assistance a center should get? To resolve this kind of question requires negotiation as well as "the facts."

In relations with the district, a similar situation prevails. If a center wants to organize a workshop, for example, which involves releast time for teachers, the center staff must have full knowledge about the district and the individual buildings' policies towards substitutes and inservice. But such knowledge in itself means little if the district and the center are at odds regarding questions of purpose, influence, and authority. At one site, for instance, the center proposed to demonstrate and disseminate one of the district's successful inservice programs to private schools in the service area. The district rejected the idea. The program was the exclusive property of the district, an administrator maintained. Politics often conditions a center's relations with the cooperating districts and agencies.

In this same vein, we might also observe that a center's relations with teachers' associations seems to include both information-sharing and political dimensions. Most centers reported that the local and/or the state association newsletter published articles and schedules of events for them and furnished information about conferences, inservice opportunities, and grant-writing. But several respondents in various centers felt that the association had pressured them to give special attention to the goals and objectives of the association when making policy. Some respondents interpreted the association's overtures less as pressure than as constructive guidance. Individuals within a center and across centers disagreed about the desirability of maintaining close ties with the association. Some were active association advocates and some counseled keeping a clear distance. It seems safe to say that politics enters into a center's relations with teachers' associations, but the documentation data do not yield a clear image of the precise nature of this relationship.

5. Creating an adequate support staff

Centers have responded to this challenge in creative ways, either in their actual operation or in their plans. For example, Spokane has proposed a staff of five for next year, as previously described. Gallatin County has a combintion media-specialist/office manager as well as a director and a teacher demonstrator. B.E.S.T. has proposed a third full-time staff person to help record, consolidate, access and disseminate the ever-expanding volume of data. Southeast Idaho uses three part-time field agents, in addition to the director and secretary. At this stage, perhaps the only generalization that can be made is that centers require more staffing, or

more differentiated staffing, than original grant writers anticipated. Just at the center's operations are complex, so, too, must be the staffing patterns.

The Programmatic Dimension

We have already identified the types of programs that each center has sponsored, or plans on sponsoring, in the first section of the book. In addition, we have discussed the broad philosophic assumptions that underlie alternative conceptions of teacher center programming. Here we draw more explicit attention to the differences between the "make it-take it" and the "brokerage" approaches to inservice. In conclusion, we move beyond these differences to see what center programs hold in common.

It should be stressed that no center is solely a "make it-take it" place. All centers assist teachers to link up with various kinds of programs and resources. Yet some centers emphasize the curriculum construction and dissemination functions more than do others.

The decision to focus on the creation, selection and presentation of materials grows in large part out of the geographic and cultural context in which a center operates. In the rural, Gallatin Valley, for example, teachers often lack ditto material, paints, cardboard, magic markers, etc., and are limited to one or two standard texts. To serve its clients the center must place a heavy emphasis on the curriculum collecting and constructing role. Sally Sandoz, a teacher in a one room school in Belgrade, Montana, explains how the center helps her:

> I need to get resources quickly because I have a lot of grade levels that I'm planning for and it's time consuming for me to plan the lesson. The teacher center facilitates my research... They have a lot of different materials there on a lot of different levels. So I have one place that I can go that I know I can get the materials that I need... Also, it's nice for me because I can add to the curriculum. A lot of the curriculum that is provided here at the school is of a textbook nature, which is fine, but it's nice to have other materials, too... Especially, when you're in a place that's rather isolated, it's nice to have a place that's so convenient and up to date.

Ed Hengemuehler observes:

> I feel the center is great for this type of school. We have a ditto machine. That's it. So, at the center I make games and posters; I can laminate. I can make a copy of something out of a book. They've got the equipment. That's my biggest resource. Because of a limited budget, I need to get outside material, and I can get it there.

In urban areas with resource-rich schools and educational service districts, there is, of course, less need for materials provision. Many urban teacher talk of the center as a place for curriculum construction, but this function seems less central to them than it appears for rural teachers.

This is not to say that all rural settings require a "make it-take it" teacher center. There is a diversity of rural settings, and in some, the maintenance of a common place for materials construction would be pointless. For example, the Southesast Idaho Center represents an area the size of the state of Indiana. The emphasis there must be to create a responsive communications network that spans this vast stretch. To establish a teacher-oriented library or "store" in a fixed location would hardly be workable. Thus, the Idaho center uses a brokerage model of providing inservice, which depends on an outward flow of information and resources, rather than on a localized concentration of them.

One cannot predict the range of a teacher center's programs simply by referring to such rough categories as "rural," or "urban." Fine-grained distinctions within these categories are often critical. In Northwest Alaska, Kotzebue, with a population of 2,500, might be considered an urban area in that it is the cultural, economic, and political center of the entire region. But one of its major problems is the 30 percent teacher turnover, a problem few other urban areas could claim. The center there must concentrate on orienting new teachers to the perils and pleasures of the Arctic. It must anticipate teacher requests rather than merely respond to them.

The hallmark of teacher center programming is adaptability. Whether a center is configured along the lines of a drop-in or an outreach model, or a combination of the two, it invariably reflects the special contours of its community.

This theme of creative adaptation runs throughout our account of teacher center development. Far from representing a homogeneous or monolithic movement, the centers are individually shaped and locally responsive. At the same time, teacher centers share a common parentage and a common destiny--they are each a product of the same historic search for more effective forms of inservice, and they are each moving towards the ends of professional autonomy, community, and effectiveness. The teacher centers in the Northwest are not islands of innovation; they are connected by both values and achievements.

More specifically, teacher center programs in the Northwest reflect three basic characteristics:

1. An empahsis on job-embedded teacher training. Centers generally place priority on providing inservice in the context of the school site.

2. An emerging responsiveness to teacher needs. Center staff and policy boards seem to be moving beyond the one-shot administration of a paper-and-pencil survey to assess teacher needs. Teacher input in the design of programs is becoming more personalized and less superficial. Interviews, discussion, and feedback help create a more elaborated picture of teacher needs.

3. A willingness to draw upon teachers themselves as leaders of inservice activities. This should not be interpreted to mean that the centers reject professors or outside consultants. In fact, as we noted in the Palouse and Southeast Idaho cases, the center staff may work with university faculty to optimize program quality. Teacher centers are, however, especially committed to developing talent from within the ranks of classroom teachers.

Few would question the overall merit of these three ideals of teacher center programming. Yet the specific design of the programs does raise questions. There is, above all, the question of quality control. How do centers assure that their programs are sound and not merely liked? Where do we draw the line between the personal and professional needs of teachers? What criteria should be used when selecting teachers to teach their peers? In short, how can teacher centers be responsive, but also discriminating?

The second major issue concerns the relation of center sponsored inservice to that offered by the cooperating district(s). What kind of programmatic niche will teacher centers create for themselves? In some cases, the center provides the only ongoing inservice for teachers, so there is no overlap with other programs. But in other areas, especially urban ones, there is a clear potential for center programs to interact with district programs. We need more specific and systematic data on how this interaction proceeds, in policy board deliberations, in behind-the-scene negotiations, and in the actual implementation of the programs.

Conclusion

In this section we have tried to illuminate general issues in the evolution of teacher centers. The categories of philosophy, institutions, and programs have been used in order to focus the discussion and isolate trends. It is hoped that the anlysis will provide a useful context for planning the second year of documentation.

SECTION III: ISSUES: A COMMENTARY

Several issues have been matters of concern to teacher centers. These issues: needs assessment, policy board inservice, evaluation, and the role of state departments, are addressed in the following set of papers. The papers are not meant to be exhaustive on these complex subjects. Rather, they are intended to further the dialogue begun in cluster meetings and continued in our newsletters. Each commentary offers a provocative perspective on a given issue, which may stimulate discussion within the cluster as we begin our second year.

The opening piece by Jack Turner can best be described as an editorial. As a director of a teacher center, Jack worries that the vision which inspires our work might be overwhelmed by the pressures to justify it. We should beware of making the verification of our output an end in itself, Jack suggests. Educators must accept the challenge of walking the tightrope between the FINITE and INFINITE.

The next essay, by Marianne Hung, a consultant in needs assessment to the B.E.S.T. Center, exposes the limits of survey research in the assessment of teacher needs. Marianne goes on to discuss specific ways by which needs assessments can be improved. Strategies for conducting interviews and for interpreting qualitative data are reviewed.

In the third essay, Mark Millemann, a specialist in organizational development, provides a step-by-step account of a training program for a teacher center policy board. Mark takes care to interrelate general principles of group process with specific techniques used in board training.

Fred Crowell's contribution, "Zen and the Art of Teacher Center Evaluation," makes the case for a broadly responsive evaluation approach. The evaluation design should reflect the multiple dimensions and plural consituencies of the teacher center program, Fred maintains. The traditional, single perspective evaluation model must give way to a more expansive and differentiated one.

Finally, Alf Langland and Ray Talbert, of the Washington and Oregon State Departments of Education respectively, provide insights into the role of the state department in the teacher center program. Alf and Ray each summarize the contribution their department has made to teacher center projects.

Parkinson's Law/Turner's Corollary

Jack Turner

For several years I have been trying to reduce my corollary to a crisp, declarative sentence, following Parkinson's model; one which is pithy, lucid and memorable. C. Northcote Parkinson postulate that work expands to fill the time available for its completion. But Turner's Corollary speaks to a more subtle phenomenon than did Parkinson and is consequently not so easily reduced to bald essence.

My corollary applies to teachers, administrators, bureaucrats and to, I suspect, all workers who perceive themselves accountable to higher authority. These workers have in common the fact that beyond trying to produce (or induce) something, they also feel obligated to make the results of their work apparent to whomever they feel accountable. The shortcoming of Parkinson's Law is that it does not differentiate between the two categories of work "which expand to fill the time available...." The range of activities which makes up a teacher's day, for example, can be classified into one of two categories; either the activity is Finite and "capturable," or it is Infinite and cannot be captured by numbers or precise language.

In the category I am calling Finite would be things like writing IEPs, taking lunch count, doing achievement tests, recording at-task behaviors, filling out forms, developing a grading curve, counting the days until school is out, etc. In the other category, the Infinite, would belong all of the indeterminate things like attempting to stimulate a class discussion; debating educational issues; mediating conflict between students, striving to teach decency, appreciation and other values; pausing to wonder why--and sometimes just pausing to wonder; etc.

A teacher's day is filled to the rim with both categories of activities. But if my corollary is a valid one, we are beginning to see an excess of the Finite activities at the expense of the Infinite--and ultimately at the expense of our students as well as our profession.

Now that my terms, Finite and Infinite, are illustrated I will reveal Turner's Corollary, then devote the rest of this piece to the Infinite task* of considering the corollary's implications for teachers and teacher centers.

> WHEN A TEACHER IS FACED WITH A COMPLEX OF TASKS, BOTH FINITE AND INFINITE, THE AMOUNT OF TIME DEVOTED TO THE FINITE IS PROPORTIONATE TO THE DEGREE OF OUTSIDE PRESSURE PERCEIVED FOR PRODUCTION.

Essentially, Parkinson says we will fill our time with work; I add that the work which fills Parkinson's time may increasingly be of one kind at the expense of the other. And further, that as pressure for demonstrable production increases, the teacher will atrophy the balance by spending increasing amounts of time on Finite tasks.

*The writing is a Finite task; the considering is the Infinite task.

An example may illuminate the proposition. Several years ago a middle-size urban school district decided to select one master teacher for each elementary school, to free that teacher from classroom assignment so this new "resource teacher" would be free to assist colleagues on call. These resource teacher positions were left relatively unstructured in order to encourage the person in the new role to work wherever the need arose--demonstration teaching, observing, hustling resources for colleagues, tutoring, and generally working to spread those teaching qualities that got the person chosen as resource teacher in the first place.

Within five years, the project folded because the resource teachers had turned away from their original Infinite roles and moved into Finite roles; that is, into roles that could be easily understood (and defended), if necessary, by the amounts of "produce" turned out. Resource teachers had become de facto administraive assistance to their principals, or had become librarians, or any of several other functions which all had more distinct beginnings and endings. The impetus behind this transformation was as simple as it was powerful: the board and the central administration had an interest in the program which was perceived by the resource teachers (rightly or falsely) as pressure to produce, to show demonstrable results even if in the form of paperwork. Consequently, the resource teachers shifted the balance away from the Infinite in favor of activities that could be "counted."

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The education of children (and the inservicing of teachers) is an enterprise that is extremely susceptible to doubt and uncertainty. Most teachers down deep wonder if they are as competent (or as inadequate) as their evaluators perceive them to be. The entire education profession seems to lust after an objective mechanism which would make it universally clear what good teaching is and who the good teachers are. We are currently flirting with so many would-be mechanisms that the landscape has become very confusing. The common genesis of direct instruction, research and development efforts in teaching, performance contracting, achievement testing, the voucher system, competency-based education, and other notions too numerous to recall is that they might settle the questions: What are the essential components of instructional excellence, and which teachers have mastered them?

If we could step back and observe the dilemma with detachment, I submit we would be incredulous. There are perhaps two million teachers devoting their professional lives to an endeavor about which there is very little certainty. And there are untold millions more citizens who have their own distinct and individual value positions on what constitutes good teaching. In those professions where a worker is dealing with tangible things (air traffic controllers, cabinetmakers, salespeople, et al) it is relatively simple to adjudge what are the essential components and who has mastered them. Ten randomly chosen people off the street could examine the quality of a cabinetmaker's work and be likely to share wide agreement, perhaps even unanimity, on the issue of apparent quality. Yet, those same ten observers might, after observing a given teacher, come to extremely divergent judgments on the issue of apparent quality in instruction. It happens often--and not only in the judgment of observers off the street.

Given this uncertain context in which teaching occurs, it is predictable that teachers and administrators will begin to search for ways to objectively establish and validate competence, and to demonstrate those results to whomever it is they perceive as looking over their collective shoulders. The way most valued in our culture for demonstrating a new level of accountability invariably uses paperwork and numbers. If we can quantify behaviors and experiences in the teaching-learning process, we can presumably communicate them better to whomever we must account and, further, the tangible and quantified products of our effort will satisfy everyone that school children are learning.

Perhaps the greatest danger in our infatuation with the Finite is that activities which can be made Finite take on the appearance of understandable and simple causality. Put another way, if we can see or measure everything in a process from its beginning to terminal outcome, we can understand it, can replicate it, and can feel a great sense of accomplishment as it comes out just as we had anticipated. The process can become a learned pattern that one can apply whenever the appropriate cues present themselves. There are countless worthwhile applications of this causality notion, some of which may save our lives, but the advocates of the Finite would prefer to believe that all teaching/learning endeavors can be recast as Finite. And once quantifiably recast, it becomes possible to comprehend, describe, evaluate and disseminate for replication.

Our teacher center recently sponsored a series of training sessions around the question of discipline for early adolescents. The presentor first convinced a review panel of teachers that his training was both well-organized and appropriate to the topic so we hired him based on the judgment of the review panel. The evaluations written by teacher participants in the discipline service were very positive, most indicated that they found the relevance they were looking for the the predictive judgment of the review panel was affirmed. Yet a closer analysis of the teacher evaluation produces troubling insights which bear directly on the warning elaborated in the last paragraph--the appearance of understandable and simple causality.

Without question, the topic of discipline in schools is a major concern and everybody agrees it should somehow be better. Teachers are presently flocking into classes of the type sponsored by our teacher center to find out how to "make it better." And as our evaluations testify we have growing numbers of teachers who are convinced that good classroom discipline is a product of Finite secrets. In the section of our evaluation form which solicits ideas/needs teachers have for further training, the most frequent response called for more tips, more simple causality strategies. The clear feeling embedded in the comments is that somewhere there exists a relatively simple learnable patterned response which, once mastered, will prove immediately useful in times of need.

An anecdote from childhood will amplify our point. As a wayward high school student, Jack never did develop what his teachers referred to as "study habits." His older sister obviously had excellent "study habits" because she spent a lot of time in her room each night and got straight A's. At eight week intervals (corresponding with the end of grading periods and the arrival of report cards) Jack always vowed to look into these touted "study habits," but he never was able to recognize what he found because he was convinced there was something else--something magical and Finite--that he didn't yet know how to do.

All inquiries to his sister ended in frustration for both of them. He came away feeling inadequate that he had not been able to ferret out the secret to study habits (and resentful that she refused to share it even within her own family). His sister went away feeling that he had brushed off her best attempts to teach Jack the complexities of good study habits. It was a long time later that he learned there is no trick that one can acquire and thereafter be said to have good study habits. Jack's sister had indeed tried to acquaint him with the complex of attitudes (like perseverance) and skills (like outlining), the sum total of which is named "study habits," but he had insisted there was something more, something clever, and there is not.

The same disappointing truth holds for discipline and for countless other aspects of teaching/learning. When we learn that a fellow teacher has absolutely no discipline problems in his/her classroom, our first reaction is that the teacher must possess a Finite strategy we haven't yet acquired. Even as we question the teacher or observe the class we feel that any minute now it will all come clear as the teacher employs the secret we lack. But all we will see is the same thing we saw when Jack spied on his sister--nothing and everything. We may be reminded or refreshed about some conventional strategies that we may presently be using. But while the model teacher can command silence in the room by merely lowering her voice, the same trick added onto our repertoire produces nothing. Alas, the understandable and simple causality we repine for has eluded us again.

To resort thus to the Finite is to expect that the process one is trying to control, at least to influence, is simple and unidimensional. In those cases where the process is relatively simple and unidimensional, the attractive causality of the Finite strategy is generally very appropriate. We want to happen; we select the appropriate strategy; and X happens just as anticipated. Or, if X doesn't happen this time, we know what prevented it. The process is almost scientific in its orderly progression and predictability. The appeal of the Finite is that it promises ultimately to move all of teaching/learning to such a causal plateau. Or more accurately, the Finite promises to move all the <u>important</u> elements of teaching/learning into the science of causality. Those elements which cannot be measured and made discrete will either be diminished in importance and neglected or will be warped into fitting the paradigm.

The pull toward the Finite explains much of inservice teachers' appetite for more "hands-on" workshops, idea swaps, make it and take it sessions and for no more theoretical "ivy-tower" inservice courses. Direct instruction now marches frontally across the educational landscape in large part because it has demonstrated that very quality of understandable and simple causality we all hoped existed somewhere. To the extent direct instruction works, it definitely has a place in the instructional repertoire of teachers. My quarrel does not reside in using Finite strategies at all; it resides instead with the expanding assumption that all of the significant aspects of the teaching/learning process are translatable to the Finite. A teacher who succeeds in filling the instructional day with ever more Finite strategies may be said to have mastered the science of teaching at the cost of failing the art of teaching.

Assessing Teacher Needs: From Surveys to Dialogue

Marianne Andrews Hung

The heart of a teacher center is its ability to listen creatively to its clients' messages. Creative listening goes beyond the distribution of a survey. It is more than a one-way transmission of data. Creative listening occurs when center staff members pick up the phone or sit down to talk with teachers. As each person listens to, questions, supports or challenges the other, clients and staff members are engaged in a dialogue about teacher needs. Each interaction involves mutual inquiry and adaptation. Through this process, the participants begin to understand, perhaps even to define, the needs of a particular teacher. In the realm of teacher centers, needs assessment is less a function of instrumentation than of insight.

In this essay I explore reasons why teacher centers require new forms of needs assessment. I try to show why traditional searches for "scientific" data just won't do. My central claim is that the surest access to teacher needs is through a probing dialogue rather than a passive questionnaire.

Survey Data and Organizational Ends: The Limits of Traditional Needs Assessment

Traditionally, school districts have assessed teacher needs on the basis of two assumptions, that: (1) merely by asking teachers what they needed on a survey district administrators could understand staff needs, and (2) the survey data would yield a common profile of needs which could then be interpreted in terms of an organizational end. Neither of these assumptions supports the view of staff development that teacher centers appear to uphold.

The problem with the first assumption is that teachers often ignore surveys, or, if they do respond to them, the reasoning behind the response is hidden. My faith in surveys was challenged recently, for example, when only 5 percent of the teachers in B.E.S.T. center service area completed an assessment questionnaire. Moreover, the returns I did get managed to raise more questions than they answered. Why, I wondered, did 60 percent of the respondents single out mainstreaming as a high priority inservice concern, but fewer than 30 percent indicated any preference for a mode by which such inservice might be delivered? Why was the survey return rate so much higher among elementary school teachers than among secondary teachers? Why did experienced teachers express a greater interest in inservice than their younger colleagues? On these subjects the data were silent. My instrument was designed to record needs--not explore them.

Surveys provide limited access to human needs in any context, but in the school setting they are especially suspect. There are a number of reasons why teachers in particular don't complete surveys. Perhaps the most basic answer is itself a question: Why should they? As Michael Patton (1978, p. 98) has observed about needs or goal assessments in general, the staff has probably played the survey game hundreds of times for principals, school boards, curriculum coordinators, university researchers and community groups. Teachers have rarely seen the benefits of survey research and have often felt that they appeared "fuzzy minded and inept" to assessors. Some teachers have had too many outsiders label their needs as defects to feel completely comfortable with

assessments (Jackson, 1974). Furthermore, teachers who work in physically and psychologically threatening environments may develop a "combat mentality" characterized by secrecy and defensiveness (Shanker, p. 17). If a teacher feels besieged, she is hardly eager to share her perceptions on yet another impersonal assessment device.

More critically, surveys can be faulted for eliciting only the apparent and readily reducible content of teachers' needs. Surveys are not designed to take into account that teachers are commonly relunctant to disclose their needs and that even when the will is there such disclosure may require skills they have yet to develop. Teachers are no more accustomed than assessors to probing the less tangible, more complex aspects of their needs. An surveys simply do not promote thoughtful self-diagnosis. Bill Drummond in an "Open Letter on Inservice Education" (1975), eloquently reveals the shortcomings of traditional assessment approaches:

> I believe that the ways available to us for communicating individual needs in teacher education have to be improved. I know in my own case, given a reasonably secure and supportive psychological climate, it is still hard for me to tell someone about what my real needs are. This may be because I don't know what my real needs are or, perhaps, because I don't get timely feedback on my work, or because I don't attend to the feedback I do get. Perhaps, more accurately, I'm not used to talking about my needs, and I'm very hesitant to share much of myself with someone else who might or might not help me.... My guess is that reluctance to communicate needs is a condition that is widely shared in the teaching profession. (pp. 5-6)

Surveys, it seems, are unreliable informants about teacher needs because they don't help teachers explore them. Surveys are not listening instruments. They evoke memories of "old style" inservice when few in educational "staff" positions listened to comments and complaints from teachers in "line" operations. Rarely was policy contoured to individual teachers' concerns.

The absence of two-way communication reinforced the policymakers' reliance on the survey as their main assessment instrument. Because no one challenged the survey's ability to provide authentic individual data, it was easy to accept the second assumption that the data would yield a general profile of teacher needs. The preoccupation with need standardization is motivated by the school's desire for organizational rationality. Efficient planning can best be accomplished by stripping all employes (including teachers) of their contexts and their personalities. Teachers become roles or functions--impersonal, interchangeable parts in the machinery of schooling. Their needs are depicted as modal responses on standardized questionnaires. This enables schools to identify teacher needs with organizational ends. If a survey reveals that 80 percent of the staff are concerned about adapting to PL 94-142, the district has a compelling mandate to organize inservice in this area. Mainstreaming thus becomes a district goal toward which all available manpower and material can be mobilized. Although this approach promotes program efficiency and coherence, it may also subordinate the needs of individual teachers.

Surveys also impress policymakers because they seem so eminently scientific. A random sample of teachers can be chosen. Tests of reliability and validity

can be run. Yet these procedures may have little bearing on the quest to understand the meaning of teachers' needs. Science seeks to formulate general laws, laws that are free from the constraints of particular contexts and, therefore, applicable to all. How fruitful is this kind of context stripping for learning about human needs? As Elliot Mishler has written:

> Our procedures are aimed at isolating variables from the personal and social contexts in which they operate. Through factor analysis and scaling procedures, we search for pure variables, for measures of unitary dimensions that will not be contaminated by other variables. Ideal measures are independent, free-standing, orthogonal--that is, unrelated to measures of other variables. The history of psychometrics demonstrates that independent and pure variables exist. It is much less evident that such variables have brought us any closer to the general laws they were intended to serve, or to a deeper understanding of human action. (Emphasis added.) (pp. 2-3)

By resting on a questionable basis for human understanding, surveys lead to an impoverished approach to staff development. The kind of data that surveys furnish suffices to guide discrete and simple inservice offerings, but not the continuous and complex ideas of development in which teacher centers have pioneered. Survey data are one-shot, static sources of knowledge. They assume that teacher needs remain the same--that they can be labeled, filed and reactivated when the district musters the requisite inservice resources. But teacher concerns are not inert. They change in quality and intensity. Gene Hall and his associates at the University of Texas have charted the variability of teacher attitudes toward innovation, finding that they usually move through six "stages of concern": from general curiosity, to personal implications, to management problems, to outcome orientations and, finally, to refocusing the innovation from a broader perspective. Although this research team uses surveys as part of their information-gathering equipment, they stress the value of conversational, or "seat-of-the-pants," assessment as well. They place stock in open-ended statements of needs, counseling that "care must be taken to consider the gestalt, the overall flavor of the responses (which often reflect more than one stage of concern) and not to focus purely on the numbers or arithmetical averages that result" (Hall and Loucks, 1978, p. 43).

To consider the "gestalt" of a teacher's concern is to attempt an imaginative reconstruction of it. We do not decode a teacher's need; we interpret it. And to do this effectively we must know something about context.

Needs Assessment as Creative Listening: Assumptions and Strategies

So far I have critiqued survey assessment on the assumption that needs are personal reactions to particular environments and are thus hard to capture with questionnaires. One must appreciate the context in which needs are developed and expressed to understand them effectively. For example, a teacher's request for assistance with gifted youngsters might reflect his need to get a teenage whiz kid to behave more respectfully toward his peers. Another teacher's request for help with the gifted may reflect a desire for a graduate level seminar in cognitive psychology. Yet another teacher's request may call for a review of new curriculum in elementary science. Surveys seldom reveal the specific source and direction of a teacher's need.

In the context of teacher centers, the needs assessor, I suggest, is less dependent on the data manipulating techniques of the scientists than on the probing sensitivity of the clinician. This is not to imply that teacher needs are hidden in the unconscious and must be uncovered in a mystical therapeutic exchange. The main tool of the needs assessor is the interview, not the couch. Nonetheless, the assessor must possess the ability to understand the teacher's need from the teacher's point of view. Like a good clinician, the assessor must create an atmosphere of trust so that the client feels free to elaborate upon his request. Although meaningful educational assessments do not require the kind of intimacy or emotional disclosure that a counseling session calls forth, the clinician's ability to focus and refocus on the meaning of an individual's need is highly usefuly in a school setting.

The essence of clinical interviewing is creative listening. Creative listening has three sides: (1) trust building; (2) evoking and clarifying; and (3) developing clients' observational skills. The last facet is, of course, less directly related to listening than the other two. But I include it here because it has to do with aiding a client pinpoint and explain a need more clearly. It is not a training program in classroom observation (although it could lead to this), but a personalized discussion about ways to refine self-diagnosis of professional needs.

Trust-Building

As I indicated earlier, many teachers are, with good reason, ill disposed to talk about their needs with an assessor. The interviewer must therefore deliberately seek to create an atmosphere of trust. To do this, she must exhibit a core of empathic behaviors: express a clear statement of purpose which makes sense from the teacher's frame of reference; attend to interpersonal space and to nonverbal signals; use the teacher's name; comment on a personal effect; cultivate a sixth sense about whether to get down to business by asking the teacher to tell you about his classes or by firing a more pointed question. The assessor must make the teacher feel at home and learn when to harmonize and when to push.

Perhaps the surest way to build trust in the terms of a teacher center is to highlight the timeliness of the center's response to client needs. In other words, the client should see that there is an actual payoff to the assessment interview. The end is not simply to understand the teacher's situation but to improve it. The timeliness of center programs is not always in the assessor's control. But she can help recreate the immediacy of the client's need to center staff. Or, in the cases where the need is more long-term and less pressing, the assessor can relay this. In either case, learning about the client's response requirements is crucial.

The assessor may also wish to follow-up on the center's response with a query about its effectiveness from the standpoint of the client. This may provide insight into the evolving nature of a teacher's need, feed into the internal evaluation process, and assure the client that the center's interest is genuine. Trust involves a relationship and not just a meeting. It is sustained in an ongoing dialogue.

Evoking and Clarifying

A teacher's initial statement of need commonly conceals as much as it reveals. It is often ambiguous. For example, a teacher may indicate that she needs practical help in improving her students' reading skills. Is the problem in class management, that is, are the students not attending sufficiently to the reading tasks? Or is the curriculum poorly designed or inappropriate for this particular type of class? Are all the students having trouble with reading or is it just a few individuals? Does the teacher require a systematic retraining, perhaps including university courses, or helpful hints from a colleague down the hall? The needs assessor must unravel these issues. She must probe for specific information about the origin of the need and about the solution requirements of the client. This does not mean that the assessor must automatically ask a series of probing questions. If a teacher says she needs five extra biology books for her third period class or that she needs to learn how to operate the new film projector the assessor would appear both foolish and condescending to question her in-depth. Some needs are straightforward. But in many, if not most, cases teachers need to talk with someone about their requests rather than simply to state them. A dialogue helps the teacher know what she needs most essentially.

Interviewers often fail to evoke the kind of responses from clients they wish because they have a hidden agenda for the interview--they are looking for certain answers and try to guide the teacher to them. Most beginning journalists, for example, greet the unexpected with impatience and respond to a divergent answer with renewed determination to stick to the next prepared question (Metzler, 1977). So many of us make interviewing stressful because we abandon our natural curiosity instead of abandoning ourselves to it.

All this adds up to a major misconception about interviewing: that people exist to supply investigators with information. The typical social science interview is less a dialogue than an issue of direct orders: Here are five cards containing statements of possible reactions to situation X. Choose the card that most nearly describes your reaction, and so on. One offshoot of the insistence upon controlled data collection is that interviewers come armed with prepared questionnaires--a practice, according to newsmen, that can be counted on to stifle conversation. This inflexible interview style usually carries with it other obstacles to creative dialogue. Chief among them are: failure to explain the interview's purpose; inadequate knowledge about the client or the context--with expectations that she has nothing better to do than fill you in; overuse of generalities at the expense of concrete detail; categorizing clients before talking to them; and the most insidious shortcoming of all, inattention to what clients say. Practices such as these destroy trust.

Creative listening is an active process that allows for data collection to build and contour itself to what people are saying. Interviewing, the chief format for creative listening in needs assessment, is open-ended and exploratory. It is structured but not standardized (Wolf, 1979). Through the interview the assessor helps the client sharpen his insights about professional needs and crystallize his expectations for assistance.

Developing Clients' Observational Skills

In asking teachers to clarify their needs assessors may find that many teachers lack the kind of specific data necessary to respond. This is not to fault teachers. Systematic data collection is rarely part of a teacher's training. Moreover, a teacher's day is so busy that there seems little time for classroom research. But a certain amount of data is helpful, if not indispensable, in understanding a teacher's need and in designing a response to it. For example, a teacher may say that he has trouble leading class discussions. The kids seem to lose interest or get off the track, he confides. The assessor would want to know more about the context in which these discussions take place. Do all discussions bog down, or only those in a given topic or on a given day (Friday afternoons, just before lunch, Monday morning, etc.)? Are the discussions based on homework readings, on class presentations, or what? Who are the students who first get distracted? How does this affect the others? The assessor can assist the teacher to take data on these questions. There are literally dozens of observational systems that can be adapted for most classroom purposes (see, for example, Good and Brophy, 1978; Hansen and Acheson, 1977; and Hyman, 1974). It is beyond the scope of this essay to review specific observational approaches. A needs assessor should be conversant with at least the main sources of these approaches so that she can recommend techniques for particular teachers. The assessor may be unable to conduct observations herself, but she should help the client arrange for peer observers or provide suggestions for using students as observers. The role of the assessor is not to demand data, but to help the client develop it.

In urging needs assessors to assist teachers in systematic observation I am in effect advocating a more scientific approach to need clarification. This may seem ironic in light of my critique of traditional "scientific" surveys. However, in the best sense of the term, science refers to disciplined and careful observation, not merely the use of a standardized instrument. As Abraham Kaplan (1964) has written:

> It is this deliberateness and control of the process of observation that is distinctive of science, not merely the use of special instruments (important as they are)... Tycho Brahe was one of the greatest of astronomical observers though he had no telescope; Darwin also relied heavily on the naked eye; De Toqueville was a superb observer without any of the data gathering devices of contemporary social research. (p. 126)

Perhaps needs assessors' greatest contribution to teacher centers will be their help in enabling teachers to become better observers and analysts of their own situation. As Lindblom and Cohen have suggested in a recent book on social science and social problem solving (1979), the informed public already uses many of the same methods of speculation, definition, hypothesis formation and verification that professional scientists use. Social scientists use these methods more skillfully and rigorously, but the methods remain essentially the same. Aiding teachers to observe their classes more systematically does not entail transforming the thinking patterns of ordinary teachers. Teachers already engage in observation and reflection. The point is to empower them to perform these functions more skillfully.

Conclusion

The first part of this essay pointed out the problems in relying on the survey to understand the needs of teachers. Teachers generally don't like to fill out surveys and often ignore them. Moreover, surveys, even when completed, yield superficial or incomplete knowledge. Surveys listen mechanically, not creatively. Needs assessment involves a relationship between the center staff and its clients. Interviews must be used which establish trust, promote clarity, and develop observational skills. The participatory and responsive ethic of the teacher center program must inform its needs assessment approach.

This is not to say that surveys should never be used. One of the functions of surveys might be to verify the conclusions drawn from interviews about the collective needs of teachers in a given area. Teacher centers in the Northwest do not deal exclusively on a one-to-one basis with clients. Workshops and courses are often designed in response to a general teacher need. To zero in on group needs, a series of interviews can be conducted, perhaps with a random sample of teachers. The assessor would look for recurring regularities among the interview data and then design a survey to check these regularities against a larger population. In this way the survey questions may reflect a vital concern of teachers, and the results would prove more useful.

Teacher centers require valid and workable definitions of teacher needs. Towards this end, needs assessors must cultivate the skills of the clinician as well as the researcher. They must take care to learn from their clients and also to teach them. Indeed, in sharpening observation and communication skills in teachers, needs assessment may itself evolve into a major staff development process.

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POLICY BOARD TRAINING
Documentation of a Training Program for the BETHEL-EUGENE-SPRINGFIELD TEACHER CENTER POLICY BOARD (1978-1979)

Mark Millemann

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I. INTRODUCTION

Newly formed teacher center policy boards are faced, as are all newly constituted governance bodies, with the task of organizing themselves into effectively functioning decision-making groups. Often, however, the difficult task of initial organization is further complicated by the fact that few alternative models exist for policy boards. In the absence of qualitatively different models and feeling pressured to make the necessary organizational decisions as expeditiously as possible, many 'youthful' boards rely heavily on the one model with which most of us are familiar, i.e., the traditional school board model.

By relying on the traditional school board model and adopting many of it's particulars, a new policy board can, in fact, make certain important operational decisions by default. For example, parlimentary procedure might be adopted with little or no discussion, the assumption of majority vote as the board's decision-making mode may be viewed by board members as fait accompli, and the powers and responsibilities of the chairperson might frequently go unstated.

While the traditional school board model is certainly appropriate for certain governance bodies, it does not necessarily follow that such a model is appropriate for teacher center policy boards. Quite to the contrary: the traditional school board model has a number of noteworthy liabilities which makes its usefulness to teacher center policy boards highly questionable.

The remainder of this documentation report will focus on two such liabilities and describe a process which is currently being employed to assist the Bethel-Eugene-Springfield Teacher (B.E.S.T.) Center Policy Board in developing what, in my judgment, is a qualitatively new way of operating and deciding.

II. THE TRADITIONAL BOARD MODEL: TWO PITFALLS

At the most basic level, the procedures that a policy board adopts are intended to assist members in managing their differences and making decisions in a productive, efficient and satisfying manner. Perhaps, then, the two most important decisions a new board must make are: (1) deciding how to decide, i.e., selecting a decision-making mode, and (2) deciding how to manage their differences.

A. Deciding How to Decide: The Voting Model

The voting model, which is used almost universally by governance bodies, has known assets, e.g., expediency. However, more and more is known about the liabilities associated with its use. When compared to decision-making alternatives which stress collaboration, e.g., the consensus decision-making mode, decisions made by majority vote are more likely to suffer from some of the following conditions:

1. a decision which has been made after considering only one or two alternatives;

2. a decision, therefore, which is often less innovative and/or creative;

3. a decision which has not been fully debated because key minority positions have been withheld, i.e., censored;

4. a decision which is not understood by all members;

5. a decision which is not accepted and/or supported by all members; or

6. a decision, for the reasons elaborated above, which is of limited 'quality.'

If a policy board is concerned with preventing some of these potential problems, it would be wise to explore alternative decision-making modes which stress collaboration rather than the traditionally more competitive nature of voting modes. One word of caution, however. The use of an alternative decision-making mode such as consensus does not necessarily assure that decisions will be of higher quality, better understood or more widely supported by board members. It merely means that there exists a greater likelihood of such being the case.

B. Managing Differences: Win-Lose Approaches

Conflict, surely one of the most human experiences is an inherent and ineradicable factor in any organizational or interpersonal setting. The basic conflict in any group setting derives from the fact that individuals bring to the group their own self-interests. As an individual attempts to operate within the group setting she/he is continually confronted with the delemma of choice between concerns of autonomy, i.e., pursuing one's own self-interests, and concerns of interdependence, i.e., pursuing the common good of the group. When the individual's own self-interest is in opposition with the interests, values, expectations, goals and ideas of others, conflict exists!

The potential for conflict seems even greater for teacher center policy boards since members are intentionally selected to represent a variety of potentially conflicting constituency groups, e.g., teachers, administrators and school boards. An individual policy board member has both his/her own good and the constituency group's self-interest to consider. The possibilities for conflict between the individual who owns self, as well as internalized constituent group interests, and other board members are dramatically increased. This enlarged problem of self-interests places additional demands on each board member, which only serves to exacerbate a situation already filled with conflict possibilities. Each individual is placed in a situation, by working directly with other board members, where inevitable differences in values, expectations and goals will become manifest as interpersonal and intragroup conflicts.

How a teacher center policy board chooses to manage the conflicts between its members seems a crucial consideration. There exists a variety of strategies for managing conflict, each with its costs and benefits. Most policy boards, however, seem to rely heavily on win-lose competitive approaches.

In this respect, boards are in no way unique. We as a culture seem to be 'socially illiterate' in that we have limited vocabulary, processes and skills for creatively analyzing and solving social problems in ways that do not victimize or diminish others. Our available repertoire of conflict management strategies has been, and to a great extent continues to be, limited to a related family of competitive, win-lose approaches.

Win-lose competitive strategies (i.e., interactions designed to prevent or produce some outcome against the resistance of another) have numerous negative and escalating effects on groups. Some of the 'costs' of relying on such strategies for managing differences are particularly significant for teacher center policy boards and are highlighted below.

1. The goal of winning the conflict becomes primary, supplementing or supplanting the original conflict of interest;

2. groups or individuals in this escalating process of competition

   2.1 distort the perception and judgment of their own and the others' work;

   2.2 are relatively blind to points of commonality between their own and the others' positions;

   2.3 reduce, distort and/or censor communication with the other party;

   2.4 increasingly destruct and suspect the motives of the other individual or group;

   2.5 increasingly disassociate themselves from the other, emphasizing differences; and

   2.6 escalate hostilities or attacks directed toward their opponent;

3. during the course of destructive conflict, expansion occurs along various dimensions of the conflict, e.g., the size and number of the issues involved and the number of persons implicated on each side of the issue;

4. finally, if the escalation continues, efforts to make threats credible take the form of brinkmanship tactics designed to convince the opponent that one is serious about carrying through on a threat.

If this scenario were not enough, a final cost of the win-lose strategy seems particularly relevant to teacher center policy boards since their members are selected to represent a variety of constituency groups. Representatives, selected by their respective groups, to represent a constituency position, are pressured to engage in win-lose tactics and, in fact, are rewarded for doing so. Constituent groups often want their representative to report victory, not mere problem solving. Representatives' loyalty to their group's position replaces the exercise of logic and problem solving. Each, as a representative, is not free to act in accord with the 'facts' or even engage in compromise. For to do so would be interpreted by their group as bringing defeat.

While the scenario of conflict escalation as described in the previous discussion is certainly extreme, it, unfortunately, is not the exception in actual practice. Too often conflicts between policy board members or subgroups of the board escalate in the manner described.

III. A QUALITATIVELY NEW WAY OF INTERACTING: COLLABORATION VS. COMPETITION

How can a policy board avoid the two pitfalls of traditional boards as previously described, i.e., employing a voting decision-making mode and relying on win-lose competitive strategies for managing differences between board members? In my judgment, collaboration, the willingness to align one's own purposes with those of diverse others and to negotiate mutually acceptable outcomes, offsets a number of the known liabilities of competitive approaches. For example,

1. In groups using collaboraive processes, e.g., consensus decision-making, communication tends to be more open, accurate and complete; there exists an increased sensitivity to commonalities; attitudes toward others are more trusting; a mutual orientation to the problem exists; and there exists a commitment to seek a mutually satisfactory solution.

2. Groups in conflict, using collaborative techniques, achieve higher quality, integrative and creative solutions than groups relying on competitive strategies.

3. The decisions of groups using collaborative strategies tend to be better understood by group members and more widely supported.

4. Groups using collaborative techniques generally are able to outperform even its own best individual resource.

5. Compared with competitively organized groups, collaborative groups are characterized by stronger individual motivation to complete the group task, stronger feelings of obligation toward other members, and greater satisfaction with the group and its products.

Although these are only some of the frequently mentioned and observed assets of collaborative decision-making and conflict resolution strategies

in groups, they seem sufficient reason for teacher center policy boards to carefully explore and, if deemed appropriate, become skilled in collaborative processes.

What follows is a description of a training program designed to assist one teacher center policy board in increasing its capacity to interact, decide and manage its differences collaboratively.

IV. B.E.S.T. CENTER POLICY BOARD TRAINING PROGRAM

Before describing the on-going board training program being employed with the B.E.S.T. Center Policy Board, one word of caution is in order. The description of the program, as proposed and actually implemented, is written exclusively from my (i.e., the consultant's) perspective. Although every effort has been made to accurately represent the board training program, a true understanding of the process can only be achieved through a synthesis of the director's, board members' and my perceptions of the process.

A. The Training Process: Getting Started

I was contacted by the director of B.E.S.T. Center and asked to discuss possible board training activities and, if interested, submit a proposal outlining the goals and content of such training. During our initial meeting, the history of the center was reviewed, current board practices were described, current as well as anticipated board problems were identified from the director's perspective and possible training alternatives were discussed.

B. The Training Process: As Proposed

An original proposal, delineating three training phases, was submitted to the board for their review. Phase I of the proposed training program outlined diagnostic/needs assessment activities; Phase II, proposed training activities and sequencing; and Phase III, follow-up training and consultation activities.

After some discussion, the board suggested modifying the proposal by essentially eliminating Phase I. As originally proposed, Phase I specified four to six weeks of diagnostic activity designed to assist both the consultant and the board in determining training needs. The suggested diagnostic activities included consultant observation of two to three board meetings and board self-assessment of its own perceived effectiveness and problems. In discussing this phase of the proposed training, however, board members indicated that sufficient needs assessment information was already available. More specifically, members indicated the need to (1) develop skills in consensus decision-making, (2) develop operational agreements, and (3) develop policy in a variety of pressing areas.

Given that board training needs were apparent to board members, it was recommended that a modified proposal be resubmitted at the board's next meeting.

C. Training Process: As Modified and Approved

1. The Goals. The final proposal, as approved by the policy board, described a training program designed to assist the board in

1.1 improving its continous adaptive planning or self-renewal skills,

1.2 using qualitatively different ways to make quality decisions in an efficient manner and in ways which are satisfying to board members,

1.3 assuming proactive (versus reactive) postures for dealing with anticipated group, interpersonal and organizational problems,

1.4 developing skills in ways to depersonalize problem solving and achieve integrative versus win-lose solutions to conflict, and

1.5 developing a qualitatively different model for how teachers, administrators and school board members can interact.

Of the stated goals, the first goal, relating to self-renewal capabilities, was and continues to be the most important. The intended purpose of all proposed board training activities was to help the board develop their own self-renewal capabilities. Although the terminology used to describe the process of self-renewal might vary, e.g., adaptive, regenerative or morphogenetic, the descriptions of the process itself are remarkably similar. For example, one author, Warren Bennis, in describing the process suggests that self-renewal is the ability to

a. learn from experience and to codify, store and retrieve the relevant information,

b. learn how to learn--that is, to develop methods for improving the learning process,

c. acquire and use feedback mechanisms on performance--in short, to be self-analytical, and

d. direct one's own destiny.

2. The Training Model. The proposed training program was based on a training model which is described in the literature as a 'normative re-educative' strategy. It is based on the assumption that norms are the basis for individual's and group's behavior. Change, therefore, comes through a re-education process in which old ways of interacting and behaving are examined and often discarded and supplanted by new forms for behavior.

Using this training the client, i.e., the B.E.S.T. Center Policy Board, would examine established norms, decide on needed changes and

implement improvement ideas. The consultant would facilitate the process by which this is accomplished, e.g., the consultant would intervene in a collaborative way with the client to mutually define problems and seek solutions, anything hindering effective group problem solving/decision-making would be applied where appropriate.

3. More About the Consultant's Role. The roles that a consultant assumes in any training program are intended to assist the client in achieving the overall training goals. In the case of the training program for the B.E.S.T. Center Policy Board, certain roles were deemed to be more appropriate than others. Specifically, one primary role, i.e., process consultation, and two related but secondary roles were emphasized.

   The primary role which I planned to emphasize was that of process consultation. In assuming this role I hoped to help the clients better perceive, understand and act upon the various process events which ocur in their environment. As a process consultant, I would assist the client in becoming aware of how they behave and interact, aspects of their group's culture/norms and choices they have for changing in these areas.

   In addition to the primary role of process consultant, two secondary yet related roles seemed appropriate. First, I envisioned assuming the role of educator/trainer at times. Given the board's needs for skill development, I would design and conduct skill training activities in a variety of areas, e.g., consensus decision-making, conflict management and win-win problem solving methods. Second, it seemed appropriate that at times I assume the role of process advocate. In this role I might offer suggestions regarding methodologies/processes the board might consider adopting. While such process suggestions would be made as a means of expanding the board's awareness alternatives, they would not be intended to influence the content of the board's decision-making activities.

4. The Proposed Training Activities. The proposed board training program consisted of three primary strategies, i.e., observation/debriefing-planning/feedback cycles, the critical planning group (CPG) and board training workshops. Each component will be described in some detail.

   a. Observation/Debriefing-Planning/Feedback Cycles - The cycle, not too surprisingly, contained three parts. First, I planned to observe one board meeting a month, intervening only when appropriate and in a manner designed to help the board relect on how it was operating and how it could improve its effectiveness. Second, shortly after each meeting, I would meet with members of the CPG, a group composed of the director, board chairperson and other board representatives, to debrief the meeting further and plan what might be done to improve future meetings. And third, I would then summarize my observations, critical information from the CPG's debrief, and recommendations for improved group effectiveness and feed it back to the board prior to the next meeting.

Five of these cycles were proposed as part of Phase II training activities.

b. The Critical Planning Group (CPG) - Although the CPG was briefly described in the previous discussion, it deserves further attention.

The CPG was an attempt on my part to build what is commonly referred to as the 'inside/outside' team. The team, composed of myself as the 'outside' consultant and the 'inside' policy board members, was to function interdependently on such tasks as:

(1) assessing needs and problems,

(2) identifying alternative ways to improve board effectiveness,

(3) evaluating the success of improvement efforts, and

(4) designing the board training workshops.

It was my hope that in so doing, the likelihood of the board freely choosing and becoming committed to the goals and training activities would increase.

The CPG was also viewed by me as an opportunity to decrease the board's reliance on me, as the outside consultant/'expert,' and thereby increase its confidence in its own self-renewal capabilities, i.e., the board's ability to regularly monitor and improve its effectiveness.

c. The Board Training Workshops - As originally proposed, two all-day board training workshops were envisioned as part of the overall training program. The first workshop was intended to help the board develop operational agreements, develop needed policy and increase their skills in consensus decision-making. The second workshop was described as an opportunity for the board to focus on emerging issues, i.e., policy and process needs which became increasingly apparent to both the board members and myself over the course of the training.

D. The Training Process: As It Actually Happened

1. The Process Observation Role. I observed four, one less than the proposed five, meetings and within the week debriefed the meetings with the CPG.

Although the original proposal specified process interventions on my part, in practice this was not the case. Rather than intervening during the board meeting, I deferred sharing my observations and recommendations until the CPG meeting. The reason for this was threefold. First, direct interventions during the actual board meeting were generally unnecessary and would have only disrupted the flow of the meeting. Second, direct interventions on my part could have diluted the chairperson's and director's responsibility for

directing the meeting. And third, direct interventions might have preempted policy board members from making similar interventions and reinforced the board's reliance on me as the 'outside' consultant for all process interventions.

In retrospect, the process observation role, as actually performed seems preferable to the role as originally proposed. In addition to the reasons delineated above, B.E.S.T. Center Policy Board members, in my judgment, possessed and demonstrated a higher degree of proficiency in group process skills than is the case with most governance bodies with which I have had experiences as a consultant. With another, less skilled board the direct intervention process consultant role might be more appropriate.

2. The Critical Planning Group. I met with the critical planning group on six occasions to debrief previous board meetings.

In practice, the function of the CPG seemed consistent with the proposed model. The group, composed of the director, chairperson and one to three other policy board members, met and generally followed a similar format. Although the debriefing format was never explicitly stated, or in fact agreed to, the usual process was to:

First, identify what we wanted to accomplish with the CPG meeting and establish an agenda;

Second, debrief the previous board meeting by sharing our observations about what seemed to go well and apparent problems during the meeting;

Third, discuss alternative ways to counteract and/or avoid the problems;

Fourth, select, when deemed appropriate, one or two of the alternatives for improving meeting effectiveness which would be applied at a subsequent board meeting; and

Fifth, identify one or two points, referred to as learning points which would be fed back to the board at the next meeting. The use of learning points will be explained in greater depth in a section of this documentation report which follows.

While it is not feasible to describe the CPG's activities in detail, a brief documentation of one such CPG debriefing might prove insightful to the reader. During the second CPG meeting the following issues were discussed:

a. CPG members indicated that the difficulty the board seemed to have in deciding an appropriate role for liaison members highlighted the need for policy development and a clearer distinction between policy and administrative functions.

b. The director solicited ideas about ways to improve board discussion on his proposals/recommendations.

c. The problem of two members interacting in a dysfunctional and disruptive manner was discussed as well as ideas for resolving the problem.

d. The chairperson asked the group's assistance in finding ways to confront off-task behaviors in a constructive manner.

e. The CPG members note that participation during the second meeting was significantly better than at the previous meeting, e.g., more policy board members participated and fewer dominated.

f. Members expressed a concern about the apparent lack of humor and perceived formality which characterized the meeting and discussed ways to balance the concerns of productivity and efficiency with concerns for group climate/atmosphere.

g. The need to more clearly differentiate the director's and chairpersons' responsibility for directing the meeting was discussed.

h. Members expressed concerns with the 'nit-picking' behaviors of some policy board members. I introduced the importance of disagreement and suggested that the board might consider developing operational agreements which would encourage and legitimitize disagreement.

i. The director and chairperson described the initiation of a preboad meeting planning session which they had judged to be successful.

j. The lack of explicit agreements about decision-making mode was apparent to CPG members and seen as a major factor in the board's, at times, cumbersome way of achieving closure on decision items.

In recent CPG meetings it is apparent, at least to me, that the group is relying less on me for my observations and recommendations, has assumed greater responsiblity for evaluating and improving the board's effectiveness, and has demonstrated significantly more sophisticated ways of analyzing group and interpersonal process issues affecting them.

3. Learning Points. Information from the CPG debriefings was often shared with the entire policy board in the form of 'learning points.' These points were intended to help the board focus on certain relevant theoretical points regarding group or interpersonal processes. By doing so, it was hoped that the board would engage, incrementally, in theory building about what accounts for effective group functioning. Learning points were introduced only after a recent and relevant board experience and only as a means of assisting board members in thinking about, analyzing and understanding their experiences.

Thus far, approximately twenty learning points have been shared with the group. The following nine are included as examples:

a. SOLUTION VALENCE:

Solution valence is the strong attraction toward the first available solution which sounds reasonable. Effective groups resist the attraction of the first possible solution and generate other solutions before choosing.

b. SOLUTION REQUIREMENTS:

Effective groups first find out what are people's key requirements for any important decision or solution; then may delegate the drafting task to a smaller group.

c. "WIN-WIN" RULES vs. "WIN-LOSE" RULES:

Wherever possible, groups should avoid "either - or" solutions. Instead, the group aims toward solutions which more nearly meet the needs expressed by both sides.

d SOLUTION-SHAPING vs. PEOPLE-SHAPING:

Effective groups focus on how we might change the proposed solution to achieve a person's support - rather than trying to pressure embers to "go along" or "agree."

e. USING TIME LIMITS:

A group agreement regarding time limits for agenda items is usually intended to help the group get their work done in a timely fashion. The suggested time limits merely serve as 'guesstimates' and should be treated as such, not as non-negotiable givens.

While not ignoring suggested limits, an effective group tends to view them as rather 'supple' guidelines. The group's members understand that time limits will often be under- or over-estimated, and are quick to renegotiate them when needed. The timekeeper, as well as any other member, can....

(1) wait until a natural break in the flow of the discussion and remind the group about a time limit, e.g., "We have exceeded the 10 minutes we gave to this discussion. It is apparent to me that the discussion is important to us and I suggest we extend the time limit for 10 more minutes,"

(2) anticipate that a time limit has been underestimated and take the initiative to get the group to renegotiate the limit, e.g., "Although we are only into our discussion of this item 15 minutes, it appears to me that the original allotment of 30 minutes will be insufficient. Unless some others see it differently, I would suggest we be realistic and extend the limit to one hour," or

(3) use the limits as a way to stimulate evaluation of the group's effectiveness, e.g., "We have gone beyond the suggested time for this item, are we satisfied with the pace of our discussion? If so, do we want to extend the time? If not, how could we improve our discussion?" .... or ...." We have gone beyond the suggested time for this item. What accounts for this?

Finally, when a group rather consistently underestimates time limits, then it might consider 'pausing' to examine some of the possible reasons, e.g., unrealistic time limits, outcomes not specified/clear, dysfunctional group processes and/or interpersonal dynamics.

f. MEMBERSHIP RESPONSIBILITIES:

Another characteristic of an effective group is that all members, not only the chairperson, timekeeper or process observer, assume the responsibility, at different times, for reminding the group about it's agreements and, when necessary, taking action to enforce those agreements.

g. COUNTERACTING DOMINATION:

Effective groups tend to treat domination or low participation by its members as a group vs. an individual problem.

When, for example, an individual(s) is dominating a discussion, members of the group will initially view such a symptom of a possible group problem rather than viewing it as that particular person's problem. The group understands that domination can happen when outcomes for a discussion have not been specified or clarified, an individual's contributions are ignored and not 'captured,' or when techniques to improve participation have been ignored. When domination occurs, the group attempts to discover possible reasons and takes steps to counteract, avoid and/or reduce domination, e.g.,

(1) specify outcomes for discussion and decision items,

(2) let a person know she/he has been heard by employing paraphrasing or some other way of acknowledgement,

(3) 'capture' what has been said on newsprint, blackboard, etc.,

(4) structure the group to improve participation by using buzz groups, small groups, surveys, nominal grouping techniques, etc.,

(5) don't assume...check it out with another person to find out why they have been participating, or for that matter dominating,

(6) encourage the group to regularly evaluate its effectiveness and discuss ways to improve, and

(7) confront the person about his/her behavior...at the break, after the meeting or during the meeting.

h. ORIENTING NEW MEMBERS:

When a new member(s) is added to the group, it is, for all practical purposes, a new group!

New members to any group usually grapple with such issues as: Will I be included in this group? Will my ideas be valued? What amount of influence will I have with this group? Will the ways this group operates be consistent with my needs and values? etc.

Effective groups recognize the concerns of new members and tend to 'meet the person halfway' vs. demanding that she/he join the 'group's terms' exclusively, i.e., the group takes the steps needed to reshape how it operates to incorporate the needs of the new member. While the constant process of adapting to new members can be frustrating to 'established' group members, it is essential if new members are to become fully functioning and productive members. The observations and ideas of a new member are listened to and responded to nondefensively, the group's established ways of operating are considered negotiable and the group adjusts to accommodate the needs of its new member.

i. THE INTERPERSONAL GAP:

The interpersonal gap, the discrepancy between what the person communicating intended and how another person understands the communication, can be bridged by .....

BRIDGING THE INTERPERSONAL GAP

AS A COMMUNICATOR	AS A LISTENER
don't assume that you have been understood; when it is important, check to see what people understood you to be saying	don't assume that you understand; check out your understanding by paraphrasing when appropriate, sharing your interpretation of what was said, or by describing the impact of the other person's actions/behavior on you
when sharing your ideas and/or feelings attempt to be specific, use concrete and recent examples to exemplify your point, and own your message by using "I statements"	
be assertive about communicating your needs and expectations; be explicit about your intentions,...don't assume the other person will accurately interpet implied or inferred messages	don't assume that you understand a person's nonverbal behaviors either; describe what you see and check out your perception to discover how accurate your interpretation of her/his nonverbal behavior was

> if you find yourself making inferences based on what a person did or said, it might prove helpful to check them out with the person before assuming that your inferences are accurate
>
> when you find yourself immediately disagreeing with what a person is saying, make sure that you understand before you 'leap' to indicate your disagreement

In a number of cases, learning points have been reproduced in a form, e.g, tagboard, such that they can be used as visual reminders to board members about certain key group and/or interpersonal effectivenes behaviors. These reproductions of the learning points are actually posted during board meetings so that they may be referred to when needed.

4. The Board Training Workshops: Workshop #1. The initial board training workshop, an all day and evening session, was held after one complete observation/debriefing-planning/feedback cycle was completed. The general design for this workshop was planned cooperatively by myself and the CPG. I, however, took responsibility for finalizing the specific training design.

   The workshop had two basic themes: becoming proactive versus reactive and being explicit versus implicit. With reference to the first theme, the workshop was designed to help board members (1) anticipate future policy needs, (2) forecast potential group and/or interpersonal problems which might inhibit board effectiveness, (3) take the initiative in planning how to address future policy needs, and (4) take the initiative in deciding how to either prevent or deal with anticipated group problems. Regarding the second major theme, i.e., being explicit versus implicit, the workshop was intended to assist the board in being explicit about what was expected of members and preferred operational procedures.

   Without going into considerable detail regarding the specifics of the workshop itself, let me describe what, in my judgment, were the two major accomplishments.

   The first major accomplishment was the development of a process for developing needed policy. During the course of the day, board members successfully drafted and tentatively adopted policy in five areas, e.g., teacher center purpose, director responsibilities and needs assessment and evalution procedures. While this was an important accomplishment, in that it satisfied some immediate needs, perhaps more important was that the board experienced a process for developing policy which they could, and in fact did, subsequently use to address emerging policy needs. That policy development process incorporated ten steps:

   (1) As a homework assignment, board members were asked to reflect back on previous meetings and identify where stated

policy would have proven helpful. At the same time, they were asked to anticipate future agenda items and identify where stated policy might prove useful.

(2) I summarized the individual work of each board members into a list of commonly perceived policy needs.

(3) At the workshop, the summarized list of policy needs was reviewed, additions were made and the final list was prioritized into areas requiring immediate action, areas where action was desired but could be deferred until the need became more apparent.

(4) Four small interest groups were formed, each to work at drafting policy in one of the top four priority areas.

(5) After the small groups formed, I introduced the concept of solution requirements (see learning point #2). The large group then brainstormed solution requirements for each of the four areas while each small group recorded the solution requirements relevant to their particular policy area.

(6) I then reviewed the charge to the small groups. They were to attempt to draft a policy statement which incorporated as many of the solution requirements as possible (preferably all).

(7) Small groups then drafted each of their policy statements.

(8) Upon completion of the policy drafts, I reviewed a process with the full board which I thought would expedite the adoption process. I introduced the learning point on the win-win versus win-lose rule and solution versus people shaping (see learning points #3 and 4) and modelled how they might be used to help groups achieve consensus decisions and, thereby, avoid win-lose struggles.

(9) After reviewing the learning points, each small group reviewed its proposed draft with the entire board, using the win-win rule and solution shaping techniques where appropriate. The four proposed drafts were reviewed, in every case modified and tentatively adopted with a minimum amount of inefficiency and 'nit-picking.'

(10) The tentatively approved policy statements were given to the director for minor editing, with the understanding that the policy board would review and formally adopt the statements at the next regular board meeting.

The second major accomplishment of the first board training workshop was the adoption of group agreements. Group agreements are explicit statements about what members expect of each other and their preferences regarding board operational procedures. After reviewing the concept of group agreements with the board, we used a process similar

to that described for the policy development activity to develop the following group agreements:

1. A quorum required to conduct business shall consist of 50 percent of the board membership (at least 9 members).

2. Board members who expect to be absent will notify the director as soon as possible.

3. If a board member is not in attendance (late, absent, leave early), it shall be his/her responsibility to:

   a. Accept decisions made by quorum
   b. Obtain information missed
   c. Have their position represented by a present board member

4. Board members will have no alternates.

5. Consenus:

   a. Problem is presented to group
   b. Solution requirements are discussed
   c. Group attempts to identify alternative solutions and find one that all can accept
   d. Group areas to vote if a consensus solution not possible
   e. Majority vote for decision constitutes 2/3 of voting members

6. The critical planning group will establish time constraints for each item on the agenda. The group will designate a timekeeper who will be responsible for informing group of need to reach closure or extend time limits.

7. Information items will be mailed to policy board members at the discretion of the director. Members have the responsibility to contact the director if they have questions or concerns. Items for action will include a written description ofthe item.

8. Members, including the chair, when they are concerned about how a meeting is going, e.g.:

   a. off task behavior
   b. members being "plopped"
   c. put-downs
   d. individual domination
   e. individual blocking, or
   f. nonsupportive behaviors, verbal or nonverbal

   will bring that concern to the attention of the group stating what behaviors might be helpful and will bring group back to task.

At the conclusion of the workshop, board members evaluated the day's training activities and reported overall satisfaction with the

outcomes. Specifically, members indicated positive feelings about (1) the group's productivity, (2) the ease with which the group interacted, (3) their increased knowledge about and comfort with others, (4) the board's ability to operate in a consensus mode and resolve differences with "no blood on the floor," (5) learning new alternative ways to operate, e.g., the use of solution requirements, (6) learning processes which could facilitate future meetings, and (7) experiencing a process for policy development which could be used to deal with new policy needs as they emerge in the future.

5. The Board Training Workshops: Workshop #2. A second all day training session, held three months after the initial board training workshop, focused on new ways of managing conflict, a need identified by the CPG.

The proposed design for this session provided time for the board to work through two pressing and potentially conflict laden issues. I was to model a variety of conflict management techniques in 'walking,' i.e., assisting, the board through the first issue. After completing work on the first issue, the board, with no assistance from me, was to apply some of the same conflict management strategies in working through the second issue.

In practice, the proposed design was not followed. Because of time constraints, the board was only able to complete work on the one issue with which I assisted them. The consequences of this were twofold. While members reported general satisfaction with how the first conflict laden issue was resolved, members were neither clear about the processes I modeled nor my rationale for selecting and sequencing those conflict management processes. Board members and the director expressed frustration in that they were not confident that they could apply the processes in future conflict management situations.

When one compares the two workshops, it is apparent that while both were evaluated positively, the initial workshop was significantly more successful in helping the B.E.S.T. Center Policy Board upgrade its own skills and self-renewal capabilities. The later workshop introduced processes and skills which, to a large extent, remained the 'property' of the consultant!

E. The Training Process: Next Steps

A continuation proposal, specifying training activities for Phase III, is presently in the process of being completed. The ingredients of this follow-up proposal are intended to further develop the board's self-renewal capabilities. Specifically, I am proposing three primary training activities. First, a board retreat workshop, of approximately two-three days in length, would be held in late summer, prior to the beginning of the academic school year. The retreat would focus on (a) orienting new board members, (b) developing policy to deal with identified emergent issues, (c) reviewing and modifying the board's group agreements, and (d) conducting general team building activities.

To be consistent with the overall goal of self-renewal, the continuation proposal specifies that the retreat is to be cooperatively planned by myself and board members. In contrast to the two previous board workshops, it is suggested that the retreat planning committee assume the major responsibility for designing the specifics of the retreat. In addition, I am proposing that teacher center staff and board members assume the responsibility for both convening and facilitating the majority of retreat activities. This would be a significant departure from past practices. My role would be that of more classic process consultation than it has been in the past.

Second, the proposal calls for a continuation of the observation/debriefing-planning/feedback cycles as previously described. Five such cycles would be scheduled every other month, with the first cycle to follow the retreat.

Third, a final all day training workshop, sometime late in the academic year, would be devoted to emerging process, policy and group effectiveness needs. As in the case of the retreat, I am proposing that the center staff and board members assume the major planning, convening and facilitating responsibilities.

V. TRAINING OUTCOMES

There exists, in my judgment, considerable evidence that the training program has been successful in accomplishing the goals as originally stated.

GOAL #1: Regarding Self-Renewal Capabilities

The CPG's increasingly sophisticated ability to monitor and modify the board's meeting effectiveness, the board's unassisted use of the policy development process and the development and use of group agreements all seem reasonable indicators of the board's increased self-renewal capabilities.

GOAL #2: Regarding Decision-Making

I would offer two indicators that this goal is being accomplished. First, the board has in its group agreements made a commitment to consensus decision-making as its preferred decision-making mode. And second, the board has consistently demonstrated the ability to successfully employ the consensus model to make decisions.

GOAL #3: Regarding Proactive Approaches

The process for anticipating and drafting needed policy and the use of group agreements seem evidence enough that progress has been made toward this goal.

GOAL #4: Regarding Conflict Management Strategies

My concerns regarding the second board workshop not withstanding, in my judgment there appears ample evidence that progress toward this goal has been made. As evidence I would suggest the board's use of consensus decision-making, the use of solution requirements and solution shaping techniques and integration of a variety of other learning points into board practice.

GOAL #5: Regarding a Qaulitatively Improved Model for Board Operation

The cumulative effect of the evidence cited for goals #1-4, seems to support the notion that the B.E.S.T. Center Policy Board is moving toward a qualitatively different and improved model for how a board, representing a variety of potentially conflicting constituency groups, might operate.

VI. SOME RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TEACHER CENTER POLICY BOARD TRAINING

Based on my experiences with the B.E.S.T. Center Policy Board and other governing bodies, e.g., school boards and state commissions, some characteristics of successful training interventions seem to be emerging.

First, although it might go without saying, board training should be tailored to fit the perceived needs of each individual board. The eventual success of any training effort depends, to a great extent on the client's ownership of the needs, problems, training goals and training activities. The goals for the training, the training model, the consultant's role(s) and the training methodologies must be selected to fit the characteristics of the client.

Second, it seems that a 'meta-goal' for any board training program is to increase that board's self-renewal capabilities, i.e., its ability to monitor and analyze its own effectiveness and to take necessary corrective action to achieve needed improvements. All training and/or consultation activities should be evaluated as to the extent that they increase the board's independence. The skills and processes introduced throughout the training, which are initially the 'property' of the consultant, must become the client's 'property' if the training is to be judged successful.

Third, any board training program should carefully consider how the 'inside/outside' team is to be developed. The critical planning group, as used with the B.E.S.T. Center Policy Board, has proven an excellent vehicle for developing the board's ability to monitor and adjust its own effectiveness.

Fourth, encouraging boards to both identify current group process and meeting effectiveness problems and forecast potential future problems, and then to develop explicit group agreements for handling such problems, has proven, in my experiences with governance bodies, to be an effective training strategy. In my judgment, it should be considered as part of any board training program, particularly as an early activity.

Finally, let me conclude by offering a series of general recommendations for board training. What follows is not intended as a prescription for training. Rather, the recommendations are provided to assist those concerned with policy board training in identifying possible training foci for their own boards. The recommendations have been grouped into seven categories: communication skills, encouraging disagreement, integrative problem solving skills, decision making modes, strategies for depersonalizing problem solving, strategies for de-escalating conflict and dealing with multiple constituent groups.

Recommendation #1: Board members should be assisted in developing an using communication and attending skills as both a preventative and conflict management tool. Specifically, attention to the following skills is suggested:

1.1 Basic communication skills of paraphrasing, behavioral descriptions and perception checking as a means for bridging the interpersonal gap;

1.2 Skills of active or reflective listening as a means for promoting accurate information exchanges, communicating concern for the presenter, and/or responding to others' expressions of anger;

1.3 Skills in attending nonverbally to presenters as a means of connoting interest, concern and encouragement;

1.4 Skills in providing feedback in descriptive, nonevaluative and nonjudgmental ways as a means of achieving honest self-disclosures while minimizing possibilities for escalation of a conflict;

1.5 Skills in cross cultural communication as a means of transcending cultural, value or life style differences, and avoiding communication behaviors which engender or escalate conflicts;

1.6 Skills in personalizing knowledge, perceptions and feelings through the use of "I" statements as a means of discouraging others' defensive or combative behaviors.

Recommendation #2: The board should develop skills in using strategies and processes which promote open communication flow and disagreement as a means of promoting quality integrative problem solving activities and avoiding escalation tendencies. Specifically, the board should:

2.1 Develop skills in information generating strategies, e.g., nominal grouping, brainstorming, buzz sessions, surveys;

2.2 Be encouraged to recognize the value of disagreement in achieving quality solutions and use strategies to counteract informational censorship, e.g.,

a. nominal grouping,

b. legitimization of the "devils advocate" role,

c. analysis of proposed solutions in terms of both advantages and disadvantages,

d. solution vs. people shaping techniques, i.e., modifying proposed solutions vs. pressuring dissentor(s) to conform,

e. submitting tentative solutions to independent third party review and critique, and

f. generation of multiple solution alternatives;

2.3 Use communication skills (see recommendation #1) to assure accurate understanding of others' ideas and minimize tendencies to distort or misinterpret communications; and

2.4 Develop skills in regularly assessing their meeting and effectiveness as a means of identifying potential conflicts early and preventing possible escalation by taking corrective action.

Recommendation #3: As a means of counteracting the known liabilities of win-lose problem solving approaches, it is recommended that the board develop and regularly use skills in integrative problem solving. As examples, the board is encouraged to:

3.1 Adopt and use a systematic problem solving strategy for dealing with all problem solving tasks;

3.2 Adopt and use integrative goals or the integrative vs. distributive rule when problem solving. Specifically, integrative goals are goals which reflect the interests of all the parties in conflict, and the integrative vs. distributive rule is best described as a constant effort to seek integrative solutions which satisfy mutual needs as opposed to distributive solutions which satisfy one party's needs at the expense of others;

3.3 Adopt and regularly use solution vs. people shaping techniques. Specifically, solution shaping is an effort to 'shape' or modify the proposed solution to meet a person's requirements for an acceptable solution. When persons are in disagreement with a proposed course of action, rather than attempting to pressure or coerce them into changing their position, every attempt is made to identify how the proposed course of action needs to be modified in order to satisfy their concerns;

3.4 Develop skills in identifying points of commonality as contrasted with points of disagreement; and

3.5 Recognize the need for generating multiple alternatives when parties become "locked" into two competing alternatives.

Recommendation #4: Although traditionally boards have used a voting model for decision making purposes, boards should be encouraged to expand their repertoire of decision making modalities and develop skills in consensus decision making as a means of counteracting known liabilities of voting models and capitalize on the assets of consensus models.

Recommendation #5.1: Board members are encouraged to accept other's claim to the situation, i.e., her/his perception of the situation or problem, and view these as legitimate statements of the other's positions. Perceptions should be accepted as reality and a starting point for integrative problem solving. Blame placing, disputing, and other behaviors which serve to deny the other's claim, should be avoided.

Recommendation #5.2.: Boards should be sensitized to the process of personalization, i.e., the tendency to personalize attacks, and assisted in developing alternative ways of reacting, for example, reflective listening.

Recommendation #5.3: Boards are encouraged to employ techniques for depersonalizing problem-solving, e.g., de-emphasizing status differences, agreeing to provisional/temporary solutions, shaping solutions versus people, and encouraging disagreement.

Recommendation #6: Boards should be sensitized to the symptoms of escalation (as previously described) and encouraged to employ strategies which can be useful in de-escalating conflict, e.g., refraining from verbal or overt violence, disclosing plans and intentions, refraining from actions designed to humiliate, making visible sacrifices, and attempting to achieve a high degree of empathy.

Recommendation #7: Boards should be sensitized to the pressures of representatives and attempt to help such boundary persons cope with loss of status and rejection by their constituency because of compromise or concessions.

Zen and the Art of Teacher Center Evaluation

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Something new has emerged on the educational scene and it is called a "teacher center." Something new has also emerged in educational evaluation and it is called "multiple perspectives evaluation." The purpose of this paper is to provide the reader with a means of linking the two innovations together. The vehicle for the linking task is provided by Michael Patton's recent discussion of the parallel between the Zen Koan and evaluating teacher centers. Patton (1979) gives the example from the writings of the Zen Master Hakuin (1686-1769) of the riddle, "what is the sound of one hand clapping?" Just as such riddles or puzzles were used to stimulate new modes of thinking in Zen students, so evaluation, according to Patton, should shake program staff out of routine ways of operating and perceiving the functions performed in a teacher center.

I would like to build upon this theme by pointing out some distinctions between "single perspective evaluation" and "multiple perspectives evaluation" (Crowell, in press). "Two-hand clapping" suggests single perspective evaluation: anticipated, traditional, and one step beyond ritualistic evaluation. "One-hand clapping" provides a different image: the unexpected, the fresh and unique perspective, and even perhaps, the impossible. This latter image is more appropriate for "multiple perspectives evaluation."

Teacher Centers and Single Perspective Thinking

A central concept behind the teacher center is that of "participative management." Teacher centers are managed *by* teachers *for* the benefit of teachers and ultimately for the benefit of students and all concerned with the improvement of education. Unfortunately participative management does not mesh too well with the single perspective thinking that tends to dominate both societal institutions *and* the professional evaluators who are often hired to evaluate "teacher center effectiveness."

What is "single perspective thinking" and why is it important for teacher center staff and participants to become aware of single perspectivism? The answer to the first part of the question concerns "assumptions." Natural scientists have provided us with extensive knowledge to use in controlling our environment by making certain assumptions about *one*, objective, knowable world. Social scientists, emulating the natural scientists, have adopted their knowledge-generating assumptions about the *one*, objective and knowable social world. Evaluators, trained in the scientifically respectable methods of social science are constrained to operate within the single perspective paradigm, much like Nasrudin in the well-known sufi tale, looking for his lost key:

> On one occasion a neighbor found Nasrudin down on his knees under a street lamp looking for something.
>
> "What have you lost, Mulla?"
>
> "My key," said Nasrudin.

> After a few minutes of searching, the other man said, "Where did you drop it?"
>
> "In that dark pasture."
>
> "Then why, for heaven's sake, are you looking here?"
>
> "Because there is more light here."
>
> (Patton, 1979, p 24)

Since single perspective approaches by definition assume there is only the one objective set of states of the world, i.e., only a shared image, then it follows that one can assess the effectiveness of a teacher center in a relation to a single set of shared goals. The ideal procedure for this type of evaluation is described by Goodrich (1978, p 639) in her critique of single perspective "objectivity":

> Ideal scientific procedure for evaluators is as follows. From the directors and contracts of a program, we obtain a bounded set of clearly defined program goals. On the basis of that information, we list a bounded set of clearly defined research goals whose achievement will tell us whether the program goals have been reached. The research goals state explicitly the specific criteria that must be met for each program goal to count as having been reached. Then, we devise a series of steps that will take us from beginning to end. Each step is designed to manage the outcome of the previous step in such a way that at the completion of the last step, we will have produced the state of affairs necessary to demonstrate whether the program goals have been achieved. Thus, the outcome of each step and what must be done to produce it are decided ahead of time.

What is wrong with this approach? Bascially it focuses the evaluation upon "program goals" with the assumption of a static, nonchanging program. The research perspective inhibits both program changes and modifications of program goals. The procedures constrain the set of questions so that only a small number of the total set of possible evaluation questions will be addressed. Only the shared image of the "universal client" is important in single perspective thinking and, like Nasrudin, leads evaluators to using tools that can only be used where "there is more light." As Marcia Guttentag (1977) pointed out in an important contribution to the evaluation literature, we must resist the force-fitting of problems to methods and search for evaluation tools that fit our problems. That search points in the direction of a new paradigm: "multiple perspectives evaluation."

Teacher Centers and Multiple Perspectives Thinking

The design and implementation of teacher center programs involves a number of participants: teachers, students, administrators, parents, board members, funding agency personnel, and consultants. Not all of these participants share

the same perspective, nor should they. The complementarity of perspectives is comparable to "poly-ocular vision":

> The individual in the Mandenka tribe goes through different phases of tasks and functions in the soecity: adolescents are assigned certain specific tasks, those between 30 and 35 are assigned administrative and caretaker functions of the tribe, those who are older are given less demanding tasks, etc. By going through these different phases, the individual learns to see the same situation from different points of view, and to understand individuals in different situations. The individual becomes heterogeneous in himself, and becomes capable of poly-ocular vision. They are skeptical and Westernization mainly because the system of specialization brought by the Westerners will lock each individual in one task, and he will become incaptable of seeing other persons' points of view. (Maruyama, 1978, p. 94)

One interpretation of "multiple persepctives" according to Maruyama's Mandenka example is intra-individual. That is, the multiplicity of perspectives or "clients" reside in a single individual. Tasks are distributed among individuals so that, for example, teachers are able to view the process of teaching-learning as an administrator views it, or as a parent view it, and, most importantly, as a student view it.

A second interpretation of "multiple perspectives" is inter-individual. The backbone of a single perspective thinking is "consensus." Since there is only one, objective reality according to this way of thinking, we must place a high value upon agreement between observers. Multiple perspective thinking, on the other hand, places a high value on disagreement:

> ...American, who believe in the existence of one truth, will inevitably ask: if you have different views, which one is right? But consider the following: in the binocular vision it is irrelevant to raise the qustion as to which eye is correct and which is wrong. Binocular vision works, not because two eyes see different sides of the same object, but because the differential between the two images enables the brain to compute the invisible dimension. When there are different points of view, Americans tend to say: "Let's ignore the parts on which we differ, and work on the parts on which we agree." Well, if you reduce binocular vision to parts on which two eyes agree, what is left is much less than the monocular vision. For the same reason, insistence on the "objective" parts on which everybody agrees is a tremendous impoverishment of our vision, even though many people would consider this as "scientific" thinking. (Maruyama, 1978, p. 94)

Teacher center (TC) participants with divergent view should be encouraged to express those views. By the same token, evaluations of teacher centers should be responsive to the complementarity of these divergent perspectives by encouraging and facilitating "participatory evaluation." When evaluation functions become distributed among program participants, their views cannot be ignored in the evaluation process, as they too often are ignored by single perspective evaluators.

If I were a TC director I would be somewhat intrigued by the ideas presented thus far, but I would want to know how a "multiple perspectives evaluation" approach would help me and program participants solve our problems more effectively than a "single perspective" approach. In other words, teacher center directors have a right to demand the best possible evaluation plan for their clients, given budgetary constraints. Obviously single perspective evaluators will argue that their plans are the best possible plans and their arguments will be clothed with "scientific objectivity," "consensus," "hard data" and a determined effort to present the "facts" to appropriate decision-makers. If TC directors "buy" these arguments they will be buying evalution products that very likely:

1. are produced for the universal "client" (i.e., context-free);
2. are produced at the expense of constraining or preventing program modifications (problems must be forced to fit methods);
3. are highly reliable but of questionable validity (in the sense of user relevance);
4. are produced solely to satisfy legal requirements (i.e., ritualistic or token accountability).

The distinctions and issues raised in this paper provide TC directors with an alternative: multiple perspectives evaluation. If they should choose this alternative, they can expect the evaluations to be:

1. equally focused upon processes and products;
2. produced for multiple "clients" (both within and between participants);
3. facilitative of program modifications and center staff development;
4. tailored to the unique problems of each center as defined by the staff and participants at that center;
5. a mixutre of "emic" and "etic" perspectives in designing and using evaluation instruments (the insider as opposed to outsider viewpoints);
6. a means of simultaneously providing both program evaluation and evaluation inservice training for teachers;
7. fair, just, and equitable (in the sense that each part of a system is effective under the conditions provided by the other parts and that the system is maximally effective when each part is maximally effective: cf. Churchman, 1962).

Again, reaching over the above seven descriptors from the view of a TC director, I would be interested but concerned about potential costs and potential training problems. The involvement of teachers and parents as "participative evaluators" does have an appeal but what about the additional costs associated with multiple evaluators and the time it takes to train them, not to mention other procedural problems of training? Admittedly this is a tough question to handle, especially given the single perspective assumptions that most of us carry around in our heads. When we talk about "costs" the concern is (or should be) about more than just monetary expenditures. For example, what is the "cost" of training specialists (e.g., "scientific evaluators") to solve

"our" problems when they are primarily interested in solving "their" problems (i.e., satisfying the universal client). Robert Pirsig has created a more informing image of this situation in this widely-read novel, Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance:

> ...I've said you can actually see this fusion in skilled mechanics and machinists of a certain sort, and you can see it in the work they do. ...The material and the craftman's thoughts change together in a progression of smooth, even changes until his mind is at rest at the exact instant the material is right.
>
> We've all had moments of that sort when we're doing something we really want to do. It's just that somehow we've gotten into an unfortunate separation of those moments from work. The mechanic I'm talking about doesn't make this separation. One says of him that he is "interested" in what he's doing, that he's "involved" in his work. What produces this involvement is, at the cutting edge of consciousness, an absence of any sense of separateness of subject and object.
>
> ...So the thing to do when working on a motorcycle, as in any other task, is to cultivate the peace of mind which does not separate one's self from one's surroundings. When that is done successfully then everything else follows naturally (1975, pp. 289-290).

"Participative evaluation" in its broadest sense can be interpreted as a system evaluating itself, i.e., a removal of the separation of subject and object, of the "disinterested observer." There remains the evaluation consultant but he performs both a facilitative function and an "etic" function in terms of which the system (e.g., the teacher center) evolves and is held accountable to stakeholders. The main problems of evaluation are defined and solved by the participants themselves. Patton (1979) provides a good eample of participant-focused evaluation as opposed to externally-imposed evaluation and the differences between the two:

> In 1972 the teacher training program at the New School for Behavioral Studies in Education, University of North Dakota, was to be evaluated as part of a national Office of Education study. Dean Vito Perrone argued that the study, as designed, would be useless to the new school. He talked the Office of Education people into allowing him to spend the new school's portion of the evaluation money on a study locally conducted. The subsequent evaluation was entirely staff designed and produced instruments and data that have become an integral part of the North Dakota program. the national study produced large volumes of numbers (with blanks entered on the lines for North Dakota), and as far as I can tell, was of no particular use to anyone (pp. 8-9).

The "expert," highly trained, outsider evaluator does bring specialized tools to bear upon the evaluation problems of a teacher center. Unfortunately, those

tools are tied to knowledge assumptions that too often fail to appreciate the complexity of the system being evaluated:

> "all systems are infinitely complex: the illusion of simplicity comes from focusing upon one or a few variables"
>
> ..."In setting up a new system, tread softly. You may be disturbing another system that is actually working." (Gall, 1978)

Teacher centers are complex systems involving multiple participant perspectives. Any evaluation approach which fails to provide an opportunity for these multiple perspectives to become involved in the identification of problems, design of instruments, and interpretation of data, cannot provide the variety and the equity necessary for a just and valid evaluation.

Implications of a Multiple Perspectives Approach

Obviously the most important implication of adopting a multiple perspectives approach is that teachers, parents, administrators, and students will become involved in the evaluation process. Each participant has a unique image of the teacher center and its operations which differs from a shared image. By participating in evaluation activities on a continuous, day-by-day basis, each participant is able to engage in a dialectical interplay of images that is both intra-individual as well as inter-individual. The task of an evaluation consultant is to assist participants in designing procedures and instruments that allow the participants to articulate the differences between images and perceive their complementarity. It is a basic assumption of a multiple perspectives approach that three perspectives is the minimum number possible to satisfy the logic of this approach.

Why three? A more complete response to that question lies beyond the scope of this paper. Some examples, however, might be suggestive of the need for at least three different perspectives in any evaluation effort. Gregory Bateson (1979) supplies us with one such example in the form of the "moire' phenomenon":

> Three principles are illustrated by the moire' phenomena: first, any two patterns may, if appropriate combined, generate a third. Second, any two of these patterns could serve as base for a description of the third. Third, the whole problem of defining what is meant by the word pattern can be approached through these phenomena. (p. 80)

Extending the moire' example to multiple perspectives suggests that two perspectives are necessary to generate information that is only interpretable in a third, higher-order perspective. Another way of expressing the same image is Weinberg's (1975) statement that "any two points of view are complementary" (p. 120). The complementarity can only be appreciated, however, from the vantage point of a third perspective.

A second argument for multiple perspectives is supported by Ashby's (1963) law of requisite variety which, when translated into the present context, states that a teacher center's capacity to provide useful services to its users cannot exceed its capacity to evaluate. If there are multiple perspectives

operating among the users which are not represented in the evaluation design and activities then the teacher center evaluation approach will lack the variety or complexity that is requisite for assisting center participants in identifying and solving their problems.

The requirement of three or more perspectives becomes more readily apparent in the way "clients" are identified. No matter who requests or contracts for evaluation, the real client becomes very visible in the evaluation design decisions. The no-change imposition of the research-oriented evaluator is a dead give away that the client is the universal audience. In contrast to this view of the client, a multiple perspective evaluator always approaches a problem within a context of multiple clients. These "clients" are not identified as individuals but as "perspectives." The minimum number of "clients," whether localized in a single individual or distributed among a number of individuals as stated before is three. Forced to supply a label for each of these three "clients" we might identify them as: (1) the participant-observer client, (2) the participant-designer client, and (3) participant-evaluator client.

A teacher, for example, has information needs that can only be met through observation of the teaching-learning process involving other teachers. The same teacher, as a participant-designer client, is a participant in the process requiring information as an instructional decision-maker. These two client-perspectives function to provide "etic" and "emic" images parallel to the monocular images of two eyes. The depth or stereoscopic vision is provided by the third client, the perpsective of the participant-evaluator client in the teacher. This latter client functions to amplify the capacity of the teacher to manage an instructional system, e.g., by adding new dimensionality to the teacher's representation of the system. The participant-evaluator client obeys the Socratic prescription: "Know thyself." Translated into multiple perspective language, the prescription becomes: "Know thy multiple selves."

When these three clients are distributed across teachers, students, administrators and parents as they are in a teacher center, the major problem of multiple perspective evaluation becomes one of balance and equity, i.e., how do we evaluate a teacher center without sacrificing the needs of one (or two) of the three clients in favor of the other one or two clients (either intra-individually or inter-individually)? Traditionally the participant-observer client (conceived as the universal audience) has been favored at the expense of the other two clients. Treating evaluation as research has unfortunate consequences as Cronbach (1977) pointed out in the initial newsletter of the Evaluation Research Society:

> Evaluation, in the most prestigious writings, is defined as scientific activity. The fashionable synecdoche has everyone referring to "evaluation research." This has unfortunate consequences; it leads us to ignore significant aspects of our job and to adopt fase criteria of excellence.
>
> ...if evaluation is not primarily a scientific activity, what is it? It is first and foremost a political activity, a function performed within a social system (1977, p. 1).

In our language of multiple "clients" the observer client is concerned about models and how the world works, while the designer client is concerned about

policies and how to work the world. The participant-evaluator client is concerned about both in an effort to amplify the capacity to both represent and to use those representations as policymakers and program designers in the complex world of educational choices.

To summarize the implications of a multiple perspectives evaluation approach we need only ask ourselves (as clients) a series of self-reflective questions in the spirit of Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance: Am I interested in what I am doing; is the "material" right; is there a balance between knowing and doing, between modeling-building and policy-making, between the etic and the emic, between convergent and divergent thinking? If the answers to these questions are predominately negative, then one or more client-perspectives is being sacrificed in the name of "program evaluation," whether that evaluation takes place in a school, a classroom or in a teacher center.

At this point, it might prove instructive to continue the dialogue between a multiple perspective evaluator (MPE) and a teacher center director (TCD) in the following manner:

> TCD: I am beginning to get some "feel" for the distinctions between single and multiple perspectives evaluation approaches but there seems to be a major weakness in the latter approach. I am concerned about the evaluation of a teacher center in relation to other teacher centers and that appears to be missing.
>
> MPE: Your concern is a legitimate one, and I believe some distinctions need to be made explicit which until now have remained implicit in the treatment of multiple perspectives evaluation. For example, "intra-individual" and "inter-individual" can refer to centers as well as people. That is, we may have different clients in the same center as well as the same client in different centers. It depends upon the shared as opposed to unique problem representations. This provides an opportunity to stress the importance of an external evaluator which in much of the discussion thus far has been cast in a negative light. The external evaluator is able to facilitate the detection of shared representations as well as differences, to facilitate the generation of a third perspective, or, in some cases, to actually supply the third perspective which adds "depth" to the several monocular perspectives operating in two or more teacher centers.

Perhaps an example would help clarify the image. Among the many possible types of teacher centers, Sharon Feiman (1977) has identified three as: the "behavioral center," the "humanistic center," and the "developmental center." In terms of the distinction made about three types of clients, the behavioral center's etic style serves the observer client at the expense of the designer and evaluator clients. The humanistic center's emic style favors the designer client in each teacher's need for support and sharing of materials and ideas for immediate classroom use, at the expense of the other two clients. Finally, the developmental center's self-reflective style definitely focuses upon the evaluation client as teachers are assisted to reflect upon their processes and products over time. Each center functions on the order of a single perspective-client and yet each complements the other. An external evaluator supplying a third perspective is in a position to demonstrate this complementarity between the centers and to stimulate inter-center activities that result in more just and "ecologically valid" evaluations.

TCD: Good, that helps, but how can I convince my staff, teachers, parents and funding agencies of the benefits of using a multiple perspective approach?

MPE: That's a good question. Benefits, of course, are related to client-problem solvers. The difficulty in accepting a multiple perspective evaluation approach lies in our usual assumption of "problem commonality" and, therefore, a commonality of goals or benefits. For example, a research-oriented evaluation that stresses fixed, nonchanging conditions for an evaluation design might produce benefits for the universal client, i.e., the scientific community. However, such static conditions would prevent benefits from accruing to teachers, students, parents, and administrators as participant evaluators. Monocular vision results in "monocular benefits." The benefits of added "depth" dimensionality can only be produced by means of multiple ways of viewing the world. Both intra-center veiws and inter-center views can contribute to the needed multiplicity of perspectives.

TCD: In other words, we should not all be engaged in an activity of looking for a lost key where the most light is shining.

MPE: Exactly! Now you are beginning to think multiple. As the Zen master would say, you are closer to the truth that there is no one best way to attain enlightenment.

Teacher Center Evaluation: Single or Multiple Approach?

I began this discussion of evaluating teacher centers with the example of the Zen Master Hakuin's riddle: "what is the sound of one hand clapping?" Returning to that image after clarifying distinctions betwen single and multiple perspectives evaluation, we are in a better position to appreciate its relevance to the latter approach to program evaluation. The image suggests: (1) searching for alternatives (the usual assumptions and explanations do not work), and (2) doing the impossible. The "impossible" may only seem impossible, given certain assumptions. Given the assumption that there is one, objective, completely knowable social reality, it is impossible to conduct multiple perspectives evaluation. Switching to an assumption of multiple social realities, it not only becomes possible it becomes essential to use a multiple perspectives approach.

In the final analysis, teacher center directors will choose to evaluate their centers and programs with either "monocular vision" or "poly-ocular vision." The purpose of this paper is to provide them with a choice. We can expect the two sets of outcomes of such a choice to be very different: perhaps as different as the difference in the sounds of two hands clapping as opposed to one.

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The Role of State Departments of Education in the Teacher Center Program

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Introduction

According to the federal regulations, state departments of education (SEAs) have three major responsibilities in relation to the teacher centers program, these are:

1. to review, make comments, and approve local proposals and forward applications on to the commissioner for approval;

2. to provide technical assistance to each funded center; and

3. to disseminate information derived from each center.

In the Northwest Cluster, there are five states: Alaska, Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and Montana. Each state has carried out its reponsibilities in a manner appropriate to its setting and teacher center constituency. In some states the responsibility for carrying out these functions was assigned to the teacher education/certification staff. In some SEAs it has been the grants management staff who have been responsible for the teacher centers program. Also, some SEAs have been providing assistance to planning grants while others have been serving a single operational center. These variables have a significant impact on the kind of role each SEA has assumed in the teacher centers program.

In the following two reports, Alf Langland and Ray Talbert offer a brief summary of how the Washington and Oregon State Departments of Education have been carrying out their teacher center responsibilities.

June 1979
Alf Langland

STATE OF WASHINGTON
1977-79

The SEA has been supportive of and involved in implementing the principles of teacher centers since the late 1960s. The SEA has mandated that teachers be represented on State Advisory Committees, on approval/accreditation visits to colleges/universities and, most recently, that teachers cooperate with colleges/universities in the design and development of teacher education programs. By State Board of Education action, each regional service district has an inservice advisory committee which includes three teachers, administrators, and college/university faculty.

Therefore, when the opportunity for participating in the Federal Teachers Centers program became a reality in the 1977-78 school year, the SEA was enthusiastic about the possibility of participating in this new staff development effort.

Responsibility for state administration of the teacher centers program was assigned to the Professional Education Section of the SEA. This section is accountable for approving the professional preparation/certification programs offered at all of the colleges/universities in the state. This includes preservice and continuing certification programs. Historically, the section has been responsible for EPDA programs (Education Professions Development Act), the Multi-state Consortium on Performance Based Teacher Education, the Teacher Corps, the NCSIE (National Council of States on Inservice Education) and related staff development efforts. More recently, the section has been assigned the responsibility for coordinating all SEA-sponsored inservice activities/programs and for formulating the newly-required ESEA-VB state plan for the coordination of pre- and inservice programs.

The Washington SEA is committed to improving the staff development opportunities of its educators. It considers the teacher centers program an integral component of these opportunities. Therefore, it is making a concerted effort to coordinate the program with its total staff development planning.

The SEA's Teacher Center activities may be summarized as three major functions: proposal review, technical assistance, and dissemination.

Proposal Review

In the fall of 1977, the SEA informed all local education agencies, regional service districts and institutions of higher education of the requirements and application procedures to be followed for the teacher centers program. The SEA consulted with and provided technical assistance to a number of the applicants as they were in the process of formulating their proposals. Eleven applications (ten LEAs and one IHE) were submitted to the SEA during 1977-78.

The SEA used the federal criteria to evaluate each of the eleven proposals. It did not develop additional criteria or adopt any state priorities which proposals should address. A subcommittee of readers from the Professional Education

Advisory Committee, an SEA Standing Committee, was convened to read and rate the proposals. The subcommittee included teachers, citizens, administrators, and college/university representatives.

All eleven proposals were approved by the readers and forwarded on to the National Teacher Centers office with the comments of the SEA.

In the summer of 1978 it was announced that three of the eleven proposals would be funded as planning grants for 1978-79; these were: (1) the Spokane Teacher Center; (2) the Cowlitz Teacher Center (Kelso and Longview School Districts); and (3) the Palouse Teacher Consortium (a cooperative of rural school districts in Whitman County). Thus, these three sites were given small grants to plan (during 1978-79) to establish operational centers in the fall of 1979.

Technical Assistance Activities

In September 1978, the SEA called together representatives from the three centers for the first of a series of joint meetings, all supported by the SEA.

During the planning year (1978-79) each center conducted staff and student needs assessments. As the needs data are tabulated, the SEA Teacher Center liaison sought to link each center with a SEA consultant who could provide the appropriate technical assistance. One example was in the area of gifted education (identified by two of the three centers); the SEA Teacher Center liaison contacted the SEA Gifted Staff who provided considerable direct assistance (i.e., workshops and materials) to each center

Following is a summary of the technical assistance activities carried out by the SEA to the three planning grants during 1978-79:

1. Networking or clustering among the three planning grants; three formal meetings (September, January, and May) were sponsored by the SEA;

2. The SEA sponsored a teacher center seminar/orientation for SEA curriculum and instruction staff;

3. Travel, lodging, per diem and substitute teacher pay costs were subsidized to send teacher center representatives to other operating teacher centers, such as in Vancouver, B.C., and Oakland, California;

4. Representatives were also sent to two of the Northwest Documentation Cluster meetings;

5. Printed materials/publications were regularly forward to each local teacher center coordinator, such as the NCSIE Newsletters and materials prepared by the Far West Teacher Corps Network;

6. The SEA Teacher Center liaison visited the local sites and attended local policy board meetings.

Dissemination Activities

In view of the fact that the three centers were planning grants during 1978-79, the amount of dissemination has been limited. The three projects anticipate

the need for a more significant amount of dissemination in the spring of 1979-80, their first operational year.

Examples of the kinds of dissemination activities undertaken or being considered are:

1. Assistance with and/or linkage between each of the funded centers and one or more nonfunded centers;

2. Publication of newsletters, brochures, and articles about the centers; and

3. Workshops and/or presentations to groups and professional organizations by each center.

Finally, the SEA is studying how the teacher center projects can better complement overall state inservice planning.

It is particularly interested in the institutionalization process, collaboration and coordination activities, inservice research and evaluation designs and effective dissemination.

Ray Talbert

STATE OF OREGON

This state enjoys a relatively high level of collaboration among educational agencies, special interest groups, and the organized profession.

A task force representing these groups recently completed a two-year study of the status of inservice education. They then drafted policy statements regarding teacher education and staff development and suggested agency responsibilities and procedures for implementation of these policies. Their suggestions were officially adopted by these organizations. Subsequently, an Interagency Council was formed to coordinate the efforts of each agency. The council has no statutory status. It is a collaborative effort.

About the time of the formation of the Interagency Council, the Department of Education became part of a four-state project to develop a state plan for the continuing professional development of educational personnel. The nature of this plan has been shaped by the study cited above. The formation of the Interagency Council, the beginning of the four-state project and the funding of the state's one teacher centers program coincided.

The TCP state coordinator was asked to join the four-state project task force responsible for drafting the state plan. This addition focused attention on the concepts which support the teacher centers program. As a result, these concepts are an integral part of the final plan.

This setting has been described to show that TCP came into a receptive climate. At least, the notion of collaboration (so important to a successful center) is seen as possible.

The Proposals

Teacher certification in this state is handled by a commission rather than by the Oregon Department of Education. No department member has staff development inservice as an assignment. The administrative assistant in the intergovernmental relations section noted in the Federal Register that the Oregon Department of Education had a role in the TCP program: to review proposals. This was in January 1978. Since experience in handling competetive proposals was needed, a staff member from the ESEA, Title IV-C section was asked to develop the proposal review process.

The first step taken by the TCP state coordinator was to organize two groups to assist in the development of the review process. An SEA task force served to react to the coordinator's specifications for the review procedures. It was decided that since the state had no policy regarding teacher centering, there should be no proposal evaluation criteria other than federal; all proposals would be forwarded for federal consideration; the purpose of the review would be to help proposals to be as competitive as possible; and the review panel would be chosen "in the spirit" of the federal regulations governing composition of policy boards.

This rationale, the specifications, and the outline of procedures to follow were presented to an External Review Committee representing the organized

profession, the Oregon School Boards Association, the Confederated Association of School Administrators and representatives of the State System of Higher Education.

The meeting of the External Review Committee was interesting. Each of the four specifications for the review procedures was carefully considered. One member suggested that it was a "cop-out" (typical) for the SEA to suggest that all proposals be forwarded, regardless of quality. By the end of the day, the committee did agree that lacking a state position on centers and given that the federal reviewers could not consider state ratings, this judgment should be made at the federal level and state reviewers could not prejudge the federal reviewers. This was particularly true because the federal rating forms were not available and did not become available until after the completion of the state review.

Eight proposals were received. The review panel met two days after the due date. They were allotted about the same period of time to review the proposals as planned for the federal reviewers. They rated each of the evaluation criteria and wrote comments and suggestions. They also made suggestions regarding proposal format, readability, etc. These comments were compiled and returned to the proposal writers. Each, then, had about three weeks to make revisions. One school district chose to withdraw its proposal; another chose to make no revisions. The revised proposals were reviewed by the state coordinator and a member of the review panel. The state's comments which accompanied the proposal were based on the original comments made by the panel, taking into account the proposal writer's revisions based on these comments.

Proposal writers stated that the review panel's comments were particularly useful and that the review process helped them make substantial improvements to their original proposal.

Assistance to the Center

When word was received that a center had been funded, the coordinator drafted a budget for the state's allocation of funds. The budget was based on the following specifications:

1. The state coordinator would spend 0.1 FTE on coordination and technical assistance and dissemination tasks.

2. The state allocation should support the regional documentation effort.

3. The balance should be used to provide such technical assistance and dissemination functions as mutually agreed to by the funded center and the Department.

The budget was accepted by the Department and it was stipulated that all expenditures had to be authorized by the coordinator.

As soon as the center's director was appointed (November), the coordinator initiated a meeting at which the state's budget was discussed. It was agreed that all requests for technical assistance would be initiated by the center's policy board and that appropriate dissemination activities would be agreed to by the center's director and the state coordinator.

The director and coordinator established a procedure for working together. Periodic meetings were scheduled and the center supplied the coordinator with a complete file of all important center documents and publications.

The coordinator responds to requests for technical assistance in three ways:

1. Personally supplying assistance. This is usually in technical areas, such as the clarification of regulations, identification of sources of consultants, evaluators, etc.

2. Brokering technical assistance, such as arranging for Department personnel to provide assistance.

3. Supplying funds for payment of technical assistance directly arranged for by the center.

It is our judgment that this collaborative arrangment is the best way for the state to provide assistance that is responsive to needs identified by the center.

CONCLUSION

This has been a year of learning. It has been a year of planning, norm-setting, organizing, and of simply getting the word out that teacher centers exist. The building of the superstructure for effective inservice has begun. Yet the dominant theme for the year has been that of discovery--the discovery of the complexity of our endeavor and the amount of sweat required even for the smallest of details. We believe this to have been a successful first year, which, while endowed with frustration, has been richer in rewards. In this regard we believe it a modest claim that the Northwest Cluster has discovered its own passage to the "new world" of inservice and has helped fulfill the manifest destiny of the professionalization of the teacher center movement.